COACH AND BUS WEEK

The PSV Industry's News Weekly

ISSUE 39 NOVEMBER 14 1992

IVECO GOES ELECTRIC

Dual-power mini pioneers hybrid concept

RED ROUTES GET THE GREEN LIGHT

Major bus priority scheme launched to ease capital congestion.....Pages19-21

FROM A LOSS TO A PROFIT ON TAYSIDE

Coaches help £220,000 turn round in Taybus fortunes .....Page 7

WORKED HARD BUT NOT OVER STRESSED

Test MetroRider brings big-bus standards to small-bus routes .....Pages 26-29

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An Emap business publication

Carlton P.S.V.

DAF

1989 MB230 CAETANO ALGARVE (3.55m), 11.6 litre, ZF gearbox, 53 recliners, courier seat, curtains, carpets, drinks machine, radio/cassette/PA, power door, cont. door, tinted windows, side & rear lockers, MoT Aug '93. Stock No. 2001.

1988 MB230 CAETANO ALGARVE (3.35m), 11.6 litre, ZF gearbox, 49 recliners, courier seat, curtains, drinks machine, radio/cassette/PA, TV/video, power door, cont. door, tinted windows, side & rear lockers, toilet, MoT May '93. Stock No. 2100.

1983 SB BERKHOF ESPRIT, 8.6 litre, ZF 6 sp gearbox, 53 recliners, footrests, courier seat, radio/PA/cassette, power door, driver's bunk, MoT Apr '93. Stock No. 2103.

VOLVO

1974 B58 PLAXTON ELITE III with MK IV front, 51 seats, radio, side lockers, MoT March 1993. Stock No. 2094.

1983 B10M DUPLE LASER, 12 metre, 57 seater, PA/radio/cassette, 6 speed ZF manual gearbox, MoT 19.07.93. Stock No. 1074.

LEYLAND

1982 LEOPARD DUPLE DOMINANT, 51 reclining seats, double glazing, curtains, 6 speed gearbox, side lockers, MoT March '93. Stock No. 9033.

TOYOTA

1989 CAETANO OPTIMO, 18 seater, armrests, curtains, carpet, hot drinks facility, power door, boot, MoT July '93. Stock No 2098.

NEOPLAN

1987 (D) JETLINER, 11 litre, Scania engine and manual gearbox. This vehicle has just been extensively refurbished inside and out in our workshops. Now fitted with the new style Neoplan front, 49 newly remoquetted reclining seats, courier seat, rear floor mounted toilet, and rear full height continental door. To be sold with cherished number plates, finished in attractive light bronze with colour co-ordinated stripes – recently MoT'd. Stock number 2087 ..... **£49,500**

1983-89 SKYLINERS MERCEDES V10 ZF manual gearboxes, 71-77 seats, toilet, water boilers, 2 tables, various specifications ..... **from £40,000**

1988 SKYLINER MERCEDES V10 auto gearbox. Ref P1 ..... **£79,500**

1987 SKYLINER GARDNER 6LYT auto gearbox, choice of 2. Ref P2/3 ..... **£65,000**

These 3 vehicles are fitted with 75 recliners, courier seat, toilet, water boiler, 2 tables, etc, all with new and long MoT's.

MINIBUS

1989 TALBOT PEUGEOT TRIAXLE PULLMAN EXPRESS, 2.5 Diesel, 22 seats, plus 7 standees, Pullman body, Dip-Tac specification, power door, destination box and gear, MoT September '93. Stock No. 2089.

ALL ROADS LEAD TO AT JUNCTION 1, M18 ROTHERHAM South Yorkshire

THE BUS & COACH MART

1989 NEOPLAN SKYLINER, double deck, Mercedes V10 engine, ZF 6 Spd gearbox, Telma, 77 reclining seats + courier, twin water boilers, sink, fridge, wc, wash room, wired for TV/video, long MoT. Ref V1 ..... **Offers**

1973 LEYLAND LEOPARD PLAXTON SUPREME, semi auto gearbox, 49 seats, MoT Sept '92. Stock MO49 ... **Offers**

1989 ENSIGN CHARISMA MERCEDES, 6spd manual gearbox, air conditioning, 49 recliners, curtains, carpets, courier seat, radio/cassette/PA, centre u/floor toilet, drinks facility, cont. door, drivers bunk, MoT April '93. Stock MO48 ..... **£54,000**

1983 NEOPLAN CITYLINER, Mercedes V8 engine, 53 recliners, o/s centre sunken toilet, o/s cont door, drinks machine, Webasto, TV/video, courier seat, long MoT. Ref A1 ..... **£33,500**

1989 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON 3500, ZF 6 sp gearbox, 49 + toilet/53 recliners, power door, continental door, radio/PA, seatback nets, aircraft type lockers, long MoT. Ref P4 ..... **£71,500**

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VOLVO 1988 B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE-H 12M, 49 recliners, centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows with pull-down blinds, TELMA retarder, chassis autolube, Webasto heating, drinks machine, coolbox, courier seat, cream/orange/yellow.
M.O.T. 1993

DAF 1987 DKVL PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 12M, 51 recliners, red/grey moquette, rear sunken toilet, continental entrance/exit door, tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, drinks machine, power entrance door, wired for TV/video, TELMA, ABS anti-lock braking, cream/duo blue.
M.O.T. MAY 1993

DAF 1986 DKFL PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 12M, 49/53 recliners, grey/red moquette, demountable rear sunken toilet, continental exit door, courier seat, curtains, power entrance door, wired for TV/video, cream/duo blue.
M.O.T. FEB 1993

VOLVO 1986 VAN HOOL ACRON T815 INTEGRAL 12M, DAF powered, 49 recliners, brown moquette, centre sunken toilet, continental door, berth, double glazed windows, blinds, drinks machine, fridge, courier seat, wired TV/video, cream/green.
M.O.T. JUNE 1993

BOVA 1989 FHD 12.290 INTEGRAL 12M, 51 seats grey/red moquette (46 recliners + 5 way fixed at rear). Centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed side windows, curtains, courier seat, water boiler, coolbox, wired TV/video, cream/orange.
M.O.T. MARCH 1993

TOYOTA 1988 (October) CAETANO OPTIMO, 21 seats, beige/brown moquette, power entrance door, saloon table, white/yellow/green.
M.O.T. OCT 1993

BOVA 1989 FUTURA FHD 12.290 INTEGRAL 12M, 49 str., centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazing, curtains, courier seat, water boiler, no rear window, cream/green/gold.
M.O.T. 1993

AVAILABLE NOW
NEW TOYOTA CAETANO OPTIMO II
21 Seaters
Choice of Interior Colours

LEYLAND 1989 TIGER (260 BHP) DUPLE 320 12M, 53 recliners, double glazed tinted side windows with pull-down blinds, TELMA retarder, chassis autolube, cream/orange/yellow.
M.O.T. 1993

BOVA 1989 FHD 12.290 INTEGRAL 12M, 51 seats (46 recliners + 5 way fixed at rear). Centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed side windows, curtains, courier seat, cream/orange.
M.O.T. 1993

VOLVO 1984 B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE-SH 12M. 50 recliners brown moquette, courier seat, rear continental door, Webasto heating, fridge, orange/cream.
M.O.T. APRIL 1993

LEYLAND 1989 (August) TIGER (260 BHP) DUPLE 320 12M, 53 recliners, double glazed tinted side windows with pull-down blinds, TELMA retarder, chassis autolube, cream/orange/yellow.
M.O.T. 1993

LEYLAND 1989 TIGER (CUMMINS LID) PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200 12M, 53 recliners, brown/beige/orange moquette, double glazed tinted side windows, pull-down blinds, TELMA retarder, chassis autolube, cream/orange/yellow. CHOICE OF 3 IDENTICAL VEHICLES.
M.O.T. 1993

BOVA 1981 EUROPA INTEGRAL 12M, 53 seats, brown/orange moquette (48 recliners & 5-way fixed at rear), power entrance door, green/orange/brown.
M.O.T. JULY 1993

VOLVO 1987 (August) B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 12M, 53 recliners, grey/blue moquette, double glazed tinted side windows, Webasto heating, grey/blue.
M.O.T. AUG 1993.

LEYLAND 1989 TIGER (260 BHP) PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200 12M, 53 recliners, brown/beige/orange moquette, double glazed tinted side windows, pull-down blinds, TELMA retarder, chassis autolube, cream/orange/yellow. CHOICE OF 2 IDENTICAL VEHICLES.
M.O.T. 1993

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COACH AND BUS WEEK
The PSV Industry's News Weekly
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HEAVEN help any coach operator or manufacturer who brings a new and revolutionary invention to the industry. For the next step would be a formal patent.

Judging by Ron Whittle and the BCC's attempts to get its star rating system ratified, by the time a revolutionary invention could be patented, it would have been imitated, stolen, modified and ultimately outdated.

Thoroughness is highly commendable. Inaction, obstruction and petty mindedness is not. The Patents Office is a dinosaur within this modern world. It is remarkable that the current Government has not insisted on a speeding up of the patents system, but perhaps ministers have as much trouble as the BCC in talking to the Patents Office.

Star rating will not address all of the problems of the UK coach industry. There will be no overnight revolution. But as a marketing tool for responsible operators it is becoming essential, allowing them to give a simple quality assurance to the public... one which should ensure margins for top-quality vehicles are not undermined by misleading quotes from mediocre companies, for a mediocre product.

Thoroughness is highly commendable. Inaction, obstruction and petty mindedness is not. The Patents Office is a dinosaur within this modern world.

The Government this week attempted to bolster industry confidence in its ability to rescue the economy with the Autumn Statement. Those measures are costly when compared with the small amount of effort required to discover signs of life within the Patents Office and motivate it to do its job.

■ Only now will operators know the full implications of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement.

To say that Conservative economic policies are under suspicion would be an understatement. Indeed, it is difficult to know what the Government's policy will be from one week to the next.

We need a sense of direction that will, among other things, unlock the order for 68 low-floor buses for London which has been delayed until the Chancellor's intentions are clear.

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Kay Jeffries
Subscription inquiries
EMAP Business Publishing Ltd
Tel - 081 868 4499
Subscription sales
Lorrie Finley
Tel - 0733 63100
Publishing director
Ian Griffin

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DIGEST

■ **Staffordshire-based PMT** has launched a major Anti-Congestion campaign. It is offering an 'Anti congestion guide' which explains problems and suggests solutions while encouraging the public to lobby their local councillor. The company is hoping that highway authorities will be pressured into action. Page 6.

■ **Grampian Regional Transport** has its eagerly-awaited Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz 0405G articulated bus. Features such as air-conditioning, double glazing and on-board information system make the 17.6-metre vehicle one of the most advanced single-deck local service buses built in the UK. Page 7.

■ **South Yorkshire Transport** is urging public transport minister Roger Freeman to support a revolutionary plan for a consortium of local bus operators and other businesses to invest in designated bus corridors. If the plans are given the green light, operators could provide new buses, and better services including the use of the latest technology to lift the quality of bus services. Page 8.

■ **Duple (Metsec) has won** a major export order to supply 2,500 bus bodies to the Government of Sri Lanka. The order, won by the company - a subsidiary of Dennis parent Trinity Holdings - against stiff international competition, calls for bodies in kit form for assembly over a two-year period. Page 10.

■ **British-built PSV sales are up** by 9.4 per cent and imports up 3.2 per cent, according the latest Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders figures. Meanwhile Wadham Stringer's managing director Geoff Bailey has warned of a flood of imports if the recession deepens. He says the decline in our manufacturing base is tragic and, once any recovery starts, there will be a tendency to suck in imports. Page 11 and 12.

COACH AND BUS EVENTS:

- November 17: Buses Worldwide, Fred Tallant Hall, London. Ian Johnston, 3 Cypress Drive, Fleet, Hants GU13 9HE.
- November 24: Omnibus Society Meeting. Arthur Townsend - Has Anything Changed? London Transport, 55 Broadway. Tel Barry Lejeune on 071 918 3295.
- November 30: PTIU Bus Privatisation, Pensions and Public Accountability seminar, County Hall, Lancashire County Council, Preston. Conference organiser, 071 923 3850.
- November 30 - December 2: Computer-aided Operating Systems and Traffic in the Cities conference, Hotel Sofitel, Paris, France. Tel Francois Barbier on 010 33 1 46 11 3535, or Fax Jean-Jacques Marchand, 010 33 1 40 16 1172.
- January 15 to January 31: 1993 British Coach Owners Study Tour to United Bus Owners of America conference and show, Miami, and Mexico. Tel: 0235 812127.
- March 27 1993: The Future For Public Transport In The West Midlands - RTPI/CIT/RICS one-day joint regional conference on transport and planning, Birmingham Polytechnic. Tel Elaine Taylor on 021 331 5112.

■ COACH

Nat Ex plc prospectus published

Ray McEnhill took over in 1991

By Richard Simpson

THE pathfinder prospectus for National Express Group plc was published this week. Nat Ex is planning a full listing on the Stock Exchange by way of an offer and placing (*Coach and Bus Week*, October 24).

Share applications are expected to close on December 1, with dealing starting on December 10, and management expects The City to value the company at £50 - £90 million.

The management buy-in of July 1991 paid £11 million for the group, which then included a number of loss-making bus operations but not the profitable airport coach services.

In the prospectus, the Nat Ex Group directors forecast a pre-tax profit of £6.5 million for the 53 weeks ending January 2, 1993. This figure includes exceptional profits of £0.5 million, and compares to a loss before tax of £1.2 million in 1991, not including exceptional losses of £5.5 million.

Although City pundits thought management might be taking the company to the market a little early after their buy-in, chief executive Ray McEnhill and deputy chief executive and finance director Adam Mills are confident that the time is right and have persuaded their development and venture capital investors of this.

Mr Mills said: "In 1991, the new management team got rid of the non-core activities and restored profitability, not least by bringing fares, which had been allowed to slip, back closer to the RPI and reviewing the efficiency and quality of the business."

The management intends to improve quality, profitability, and products and take advantage of new opportunities presented by its expertise in passenger handling and public transport.

Opportunities were being presented by the forthcoming privatisation of British Rail, the chance to improve Nat Ex's coach stations including the creation of better car parking facilities, using modern technology to raise ticketing standards to those of the airlines and refocussing advertising and sales activities.

"All these things take money and that's why we are here," Mr Mills said at the launch. The management team admit that National Express is a mature business, and is under pressure from increased car usage and cheap rail fares.

But its three core areas of business are all said to have scope for growth:

- National Express Ltd serves two main groups, the student population and the over 55s. Both these are set to grow in the future, while the privatisation of British Rail would mean rising fares and some line closures.
- Airport Services, including Jetlink and Speedlink, will benefit from a general increase in air travel projected by the Civil Aviation Authority and the rising popularity of Stansted Airport. There was also a potential for expansion into other activities, with British Airways, for instance, maintaining a fleet of over 100 airside vehicles at Heathrow alone.
- Eurolines UK has the potential to continue to develop sales both by acquisition and growth. Eastern Europe is a market with huge potential which is ripe for international coach operation.

As well as raising cash, Nat Ex management see the flotation as playing an important role in motivating staff, and 10 per cent of the ordinary shares subject to the offer will be available to Nat Ex staff and the staff of its contractors.

The widespread recognition of the National Express brand is seen as a significant asset, and the public is to be alerted to the flotation opportunity by promotional material carried inside and outside National Express coaches and by advertising campaigns.

■ COACH

BR Apex fares fail to bite

NATIONAL Express says British Rail's Apex fares are having little effect on its loadings so far. It says BR's attempt to undercut the coach market is failing, to the extent that BR in south Wales has gone on record admitting it is having to react to pressure from coach travel.

"It's the first time I have ever seen BR react to anything National Express has said or done," said NatEx press officer Stuart Render.

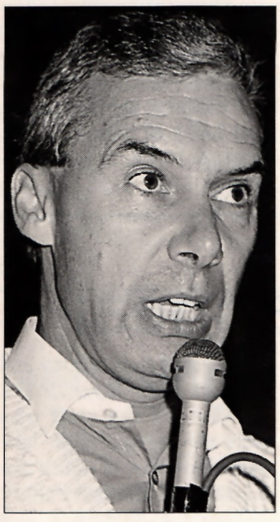
"Clearly BR is concerned about the effect we are having on them." Mr Render said a recent press report implied that BR's airport services could guarantee arrival in time for flights, whereas NatEx standby service could not.

"We remain aggrieved that BR, with public funding as a huge nationalised industry, attacks commercial coach operators - not just National Express but dozens of others in the express market," said Mr Render. CBW

COACH

Seven-year hitch over rating hits operators

AN incredible seven years of delays in ratifying the IRU star rating system in Britain has put operators way behind the rest of Europe, says Ron Whittle of Go Whittle.



Ron Whittle

By Mark Williams

Attempts by the Bus & Coach Council, working closely with the IRU, to get a star system in operation have been dogged by inaction from both the Office of Fair Trading - which took three years to hand on administration to the Patents Office - and the Patents Office itself.

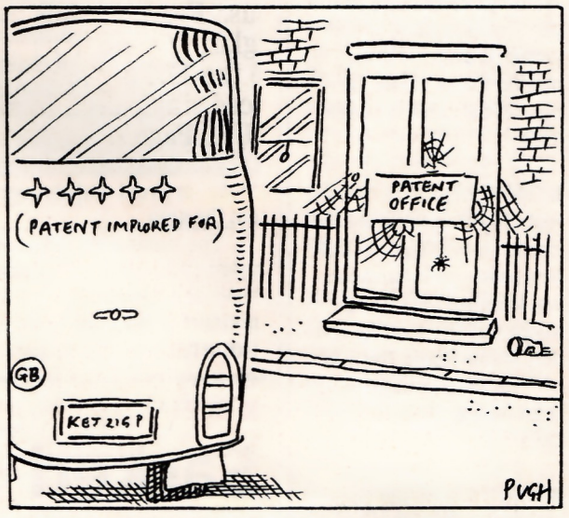
"This is a problem of British bureaucracy," said Mr Whittle. "We can't do anything to get movement from them. We may be used to going through the mill, but this mill hasn't got any water."

He said the BCC would be attempting to speed things up in a meeting with the DTI but implementation was now becoming critical. At the BCC Conference, he said the delays were "ridiculous."

"The IRU system is functioning well elsewhere," said Mr Whittle. "There was a slight hiccup in Germany because they already have a functioning star rating system. But within six months of its introduction in Belgium, it became compulsory. French and Italian legislation may follow suit."

The strengths of star rating had quickly become apparent to European operators, he said. Hire rates for high-specification vehicles had improved as operators used the system as a marketing tool.

"Let's face it, it's very difficult to market high-spec vehicles to clients. 'Executive' means very little nowadays. There is currently nothing specific which operators can say to clients. Where the system is voluntary, there has been a tendency to give ratings to the best vehicles and ignore the others."



Mr Whittle said the importance of formally approving the system through the Patents Office was that it protected the system from imitation - something which might work against public confidence rather than enhancing it.

"This is an example of where our laws sit uncomfortably with European laws," said IRU member Mr Whittle.

COACH

Commuter run booms

MORE coaches and a new season ticket have been announced by Badgerline subsidiary, Thamesway, as the company keeps pace with passenger demand on the Southend to London commuter corridor.

Thamesway introduced its CitySaver service with 11 coaches in competition with Southend Transport's X1 and Network South East, in the summer. It will boost its operation with an unspecified number of extra vehicles as the service continues to generate new business from passengers disaffected by the notorious Southend and Tilbury "misery line".

A CitySaver coach departs every 10 minutes at peaks with an hourly frequency at other times. Marketing manager, John Taylor, said: "We're having to get new vehicles to keep pace with demand. There's so much news publicity that we are generating growth." Mr Taylor claims rail fares can be double Thamesway's daily £4 return.

An annual season ticket will be launched in January.

COACH

Carlton 'will be sold or closed'

THERE is no place for the Neoplan importer Carlton PSV in National Express Group plc (Coach and Bus Week, October 31). The company's pathfinder prospectus said: "Carlton PSV is a coach dealer for which buyers are being sought. It has therefore been classified as a discontinued operation. The directors have provided for the expected closure costs in the event that no buyer can be found."

The consortium led by Stuart Johnson has abandoned its attempt to buy the dealership. Mr Johnson had joined forces with ex Plaxton directors Colin Cowdery and Richard Battersby to buy Carlton's Rotherham site and business from owner, Drawlane. Their withdrawal from the takeover battle leaves the way clear for a consortium of Carlton directors led by Chris Lavin and Bill Povey.

COACH

Double first for Williamsons

SHREWSBURY-based Williamsons Motorways has added its first Jonckheere-bodied coach to its frontline holiday fleet and the Volvo B10M is a regular performer on the company's programme of British and Continental tours.

It is also the first B10M to join the 18-vehicle fleet and will share frontline work with LAGs and Van Hool integrals on over 100 departures from the West Midlands area.

Partner Tina Williamson said tour bookings had held up well this year, despite the recession. "To be honest, we've hardly felt any difference, although it's not been our best year," she said.

The company operates a mix of local bus and coaching work as well as park-and-ride services in the town.

It has recently purchased its third Dennis Dart for local town services. **CBW**

Jonckheere is the first for Williamsons

NEWS

■ BRISTOL'S first permanent park-and -ride service has moved a stage nearer. Contracts for the land acquisition have been exchanged which will enable Avon County Council to build a park-and-ride site at the A4 Bath Road/Stockwood Road junction in Brislington. Work on the £2.4 million scheme is expected to start in late February / early March next year. The first phase of the project, providing 730 car parking spaces, should be open to the public in autumn 1993.

■ CENTREWEST'S Countdown route 18 - using latest vehicle location technology and real-time passenger information - was launched last week by Minister of Transport for London, Steven Norris. The new pilot system is installed in 50 stops from Sudbury to King's Cross.

■ NORTH Manchester Commercials has been given the go-ahead to apply for BS5750 Part 2 certification. The Mercedes-Benz agent will be covered for supply of new and used vans and trucks, repairs and spares.

■ SHOWJUMPING at Olympia from December 16 to 20 will cause chaos for coaches if a simple arrival and departure pattern isn't followed, warns the Metropolitan Police.
It is now impossible to turn right into Russell Road from Kensington High Street, so all approaches to the setting down point must be from the West, via Hammersmith Road. Picking up is in Olympia Way and Blythe Road no earlier than ten minutes before the end of the showjumping.

■ LONDON retains its position as the most expensive commuter city in the UK, according to a survey by the Association of London Authorities. The ALA has urged London Transport to introduce a carnet system like Paris Brussels or Madrid, where multiple ticket purchases are cheaper. January's fares increase (Coach and Bus Week, October 24) will make a week's commuting in London at £16 36 per cent more expensive than Dublin and 800 per cent more than Athens.

■ BUS

PMT launches anti-congestion campaign

Local bus company taking the lead

By Andrew Jarosz

STAFFORDSHIRE-based PMT has launched a major Anti-Congestion Campaign as part of an action plan to persuade local councils to tackle problems both in Stoke on Trent and throughout the area.

The campaign is based upon independent market research which showed 88 per cent of the public and 99 per cent of trade and industry believing traffic congestion to be a problem and follows a £300,000 investment by PMT into a satellite tracking vehicle control system (*Coach and Bus Week*, July 25).

PMT is offering an 'Anti congestion guide' which explains problems and suggests some solutions and urges members of the public to lobby their local councillor.

A list of 197 councillors and addresses is included with a lobby card for transmission to one or more of them.

PMT is also using newspaper, radio, poster and bus advertising plus leaflets in the first phase of the campaign.

"Specific courses of action will be considered in the second phase of the campaign, together with local councillors and officers," said PMT managing director Steve Ellis.

"Since a lead must be taken by someone, it may as well be the local bus company."

PMT is hoping that, by raising the profile of the problem, local lobbying will steer the relevant highway authorities into action.

The company has already been involved in the funding of a report from consultants Colin Buchanan and Partners to examine the feasibility of Urban Traffic Control in north Staffordshire.

■ BUS

Sacked drivers lined up to appeal

CROSVILLE Wales has lost its appeal against having to face a range of unfair dismissal cases from drivers who went on strike at Wrexham and were subsequently dismissed two years ago.

The company had hoped the Employment Appeals Tribunal would find no grounds for hearing such cases, but will now have to face around 60 applications at the Industrial Tribunal, after an interlocutory hearing.

The original action took place in October 1990, when almost the entire Wrexham workforce of 116 went on strike when the company offered a productivity deal but no annual pay award.

The company responded to the walkout by issuing a warning and subsequently dismissing the drivers for breach of contract. New staff were engaged but the depot was closed at the end of February 1991 after the company lost all its tendered work and had to scale down its operations.

An outstation has since been opened at Ruabon but much of the big-bus work was transferred to Oswestry and Mold.

Some of the staff who were not re-engaged are now pursuing a case of unfair dismissal and the Shrewsbury Industrial Tribunal had ruled in a preliminary hearing that their cases were within its jurisdiction, although the ruling was subsequently challenged.

■ COACH AND BUS

Charter for Wear Buses customers

GO-AHEAD Northern's latest rebranded subsidiary, Wear Buses of Sunderland, launched its new Customer Charter last week and welcomed Dr Caroline Cahm, chairperson of the National Federation of Bus Users, which has endorsed the charter.

The charter specifies levels of service and quality that the company is pledged to maintain and follows broadly the lead set by other GAN subsidiaries, VFM and Northern General.

Sunderland & District Omnibus Company was rebranded Wear Buses recently in the new GAN philosophy of marketing the subsidiaries as being closer to their customers.

Operations at Sunderland, Philadelphia and Washington which involve 171 buses have been beefed up by the introduction of a further 10 Wright-bodied Dennis Darts similar to 55 delivered earlier this year.

Wear Buses - closer to customers

Under the leadership of general manager Ian Banwell, Wear Buses is currently investing £723,000 into upgrading work.

In addition to £0.6 million already spent on new buses, £34,000 is allocated to DiPTAC modifications to existing vehicles, £39,000 on new technology and £50,000 on refurbishment of the main depot at Philadelphia.

After the launch of the charter, Dr Cahm met the public at Sunderland Civic Centre and encouraged more bus users to join the NFBU as Buswatchers.

■ COACH AND BUS

CMS reach agreement

CUMBERLAND Motor Services is introducing its package of changes to wages and conditions.

This follows the acceptance and introduction of a similar range of proposals by fellow Stagecoach North West company, Ribble Motor Services, earlier this year. Local reports had suggested that revenue at CMS had slumped by nine per cent, despite rising operating costs, and a leaked document had indicated that a wage increase in 1992 would be 'suicidal'.

Commercial director Ben Colson, while unwilling to discuss details of the settlement, claimed that the agreement took a longer-term view of the business and had built in a definite award for next year. CBW

■ BUS

Merc artic makes its debut

By Richard Simpson

GRAMPIAN Regional Transport has taken delivery of the Alexander-bodied Mercedes 0405G articulated bus. The 17.6-metre vehicle is the most advanced single decker to be built in the UK and includes such features as air conditioning, double glazing and a full on-board passenger information system.

The vehicle is seen by Grampian's managing director, Moir Lockhead, as a demonstration that buses can achieve standards of passenger comfort equal to those offered by alternative systems such as light rail (*Coach and Bus Week*, October 17). Features of the body include:

Air conditioning is a feature of the artic

- Computerised environmental control system, providing a full air conditioning and reheating system, using ozone-friendly refrigerant
- Step-free interior gangway
- Straight entry steps at 350mm, with 180mm secondary steps
- European-style seats for 60, with space for 50 standees
- Easily replaced front, rear and skirt panels

Alexander's director of sales and marketing, Frank Pitkin said: "It is the first articulated bus to be built at Alexander and the first ever built for a Scottish operator."

■ BUS

Iveco single decker is first with particulate filter

THE first UK version of the Iveco TurboCity 50 single decker has been bodied by Walter Alexander. It is the first bus in Britain to be equipped with an exhaust particulate filter from new, and the filters will be available as a factory option on production vehicles.

The TurboCity 50

Its chassis and powertrain are similar to those of the TurboCity 100 decker which made its debut a year ago. Major features include:

- Transverse mounted 210 bhp (155 kW) Iveco turbocharged engine, with Voith angle drive and ZF 4HP500 gearbox
- Optional "town and country" 5HP500 five-speed gearbox
- Independent front suspension with air/hydraulic disc brakes giving 60 degrees of steering lock
- A fully-floating double reduction rear axle, giving a lower floor height to the rear of the saloon
- Isringhausen suspended driver's seat
- Choice of chassis lengths; 10.64 or 11.91 metres

The body on the demonstrator vehicle is the Alexander PS two-door type on the 11.94-metre chassis. It takes advantage of the Iveco chassis design to offer a virtually flat floor and exceptionally wide front gangway.

Other features include:

- Passenger capacity of 70 (45 seats, 25 standees).
- DiPTAC fittings including bus stopping sign, textured handrails, shark-nose toothing on step edges and large bell pushes
- First step heights of 325mm on entrance and exit. Subsequent entry steps of 175 and 190mm
- Aluminium construction for light weight and corrosion resistance
- Easy to replace panels
- The exhaust filter is self-cleaning.

■ COACH AND BUS

Tayside's £220,000 turnaround

TAYBUS Holdings has turned in an operating profit in its first year of trading as an employee-owned company. The parent company of Tayside Public Transport was £138,031 in the black at the end of March, despite redundancy settlements of £80,000 for 20 people in October 1991. This compares to an £81,000 deficit in the previous year.

"Drastic measures were called for and the new coalition between management and trade unions was put to its first major test; the need for redundancies," said chairman and chief executive Sandy Strachan. He said the two reached agreement with voluntary and compulsory redundancies.

"No service cuts have been introduced in the past year," he said.

"A fares increase was implemented on June 30, '91, and this, coupled with staff savings and other internal economies, meant that we were able to turn the company round, the group showing a profit..."

Mr Strachan said the coach business with TPT's fleet of 30 vehicles had been particularly good: "We are not fighting any price wars now. Operators are looking for a reasonable return on turnover," he said.

TPT had continued its own tour programme but had also been working for 'blue chip' tour companies like Travelsphere more recently. Private hire rates had held up well and Mr Strachan said he expected the overall "modest" company profit to remain much the same in the '92/'93 year.

Turnover in '91/'92 was £9.66 million, generating an income of £655,616. After paying £305,182 interest - £213,691 on its five-year capital loan - tax, and redundancy settlements the £138.031 profit went into capital reserves.

Employees who raised £296,000 by each taking a £500 share in TPT have seen their investment grow to a value of over £900. CBW

■ GRAMPIAN Regional Transport, which first tested electronic passenger information systems in 1989 and 1990, has commissioned the Infotran system for its innovative Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz artic (left).
The computerised Infotran display, for on-bus information, was nicknamed "the helpful conductor" by Grampian passengers. Developed by JMW Systems, the display gives information on when the bus is stopping, fare stages, stop names and adjacent street names. The system can also provide general information and an advertising feature.

■ WEST Midlands Travel faces new competition from an independent on one of its prime city routes. Geoffrey Howle's Birmingham Coach company has put seven new Made-to-Measure bodied Mercedes 609Ds on daytime route 21A from Bangham Pit to the city centre.

■ NORTHERN Counties has orders for a further four Countybus/Paladin single deckers on Dennis Falcon chassis for Leicester Citybus and three Palatine double deckers for A Mayne & Son of Manchester. All are for delivery before the end of May 1993.

■ A NEW midibus route from Vauxhall through Wandsworth, Stockwell, Brixton, Tulse Hill to Norwood, then onward to Gipsy Hill and Crystal Palace is being run by South London Transport. Route 322, branded 'Lambeth Connexions' replaces existing LT route 2 with 10 to 12-minute frequency vehicles on weekdays and Saturdays.

■ STAGECOACH subsidiary Fife Scottish has just taken delivery of 30 new vehicles with Alexander bodies - its first new vehicles since it joined the Stagecoach Group. The delivery consists of 25 Leyland Olympians with R-type bodies and five Dennis Darts with Dash bodies. Fife's Olympians are 9.6-metre 79-seaters for urban and inter-urban work in Fife; The 9.8-metre 40-seat Darts are for urban service.

BUS

Plea to Freeman to modify licence regulations

SOUTH Yorkshire Transport is asking transport minister Roger Freeman to modify licensing regulations and unlock a revolutionary investment plan in the area.

SYT wants Mr Freeman to allow a consortium of local bus companies and other businesses to invest in designated bus corridors for a trial period of a number of years to prove that bus services can be improved without cost to the public purse.

Operators would provide new buses, better services and invest in new shelter facilities, real-time information, new electronic ticketing and the latest technological innovations to lift the quality of bus services.

"Not only is the climate right for coming forward with modifications to licensing regulations but, when Supertram comes on stream, with no expense spared, bus services will look shoddy in comparison," said managing director Peter Sephton.

"While not trying to inhibit competition, we would need assurances that only those companies which had invested in improved facilities would benefit.

"It would be a kind of investment licence to ensure a return to investors but, of course, other operators would be free to pick up at other points in the road."

Mr Sephton presented his ideas to Rotherham and Doncaster councillors and followed up an earlier exhibition of new technology in March.

Mr Freeman had not been present at the March demonstration but has said he would be interested in receiving proposals for investment which could also include ones for guided busways.

BUS

South Yorkshire strike averted

By Andrew Jarosz

STRIKE action by South Yorkshire Transport drivers has been temporarily averted by a referral to ACAS, as the company introduced new schedules and duties in Sheffield and Rotherham this week.

The changes follow some introduced in Doncaster last week as part of the current round of operational economies designed to save the company £5 million *(Coach and Bus Week, October 31).*

After threats of action from engineering staff over a change in conditions, which has now been accepted, road staff voted for industrial action prior to an agreement on new schedules being signed by the union.

SYT operations director Keith Moffatt said the changes should not significantly affect earnings. "I acknowledge that staff are now working very hard indeed but we are making some savings in platform staff efficiency and maintaining pay rates through that productivity."

Mr Moffatt admitted that duties and conditions would vary to a certain extent between garages but around 50 per cent of our drivers enjoy an hourly rate of £5.36 and that is not under threat."

It is understood that threats of further action would have to be backed up by another ballot since the agreement was concluded between the company and the union but hopes are now high that the referral of the dispute to ACAS will bring the negotiations to an amicable conclusion.

SYT – £5.36 hourly rate not threatened

COACH AND BUS

Jobs to go

SOUTH Yorkshire Transport has agreed to merge its travel shops with those of the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive in an economy drive which will mean a loss of up to four jobs.

The bus company's offices at Castle Square Sheffield and in Doncaster will transfer to the PTE and the shop at Rotherham will close as there is a PTE office nearby. SYT employs 14 people and the PTE will take on nine with one remaining at SYT. The rest will be made redundant.

SYT's phone helpline will also close with travellers having to ring SYPTE's Traveline instead.

■ SYT is bringing out a seven-day savercard for use in either Sheffield, Rotherham or Doncaster, which does not require the holder's photograph. It will be sold on-bus by all 1,600 company drivers and will be transferable and not restricted to the purchaser.

BUS

Volvos B10Ms form new vehicle intake

INDEPENDENT Sheffield Omnibus started its new vehicle intake early last week with the purchase of three Volvo B10M single deckers with Alexander bodywork.

The company had promised to start its new vehicle intake next year after the declaration of an operating profit of £90,000 for last year (Coach and Bus Week, October 10) but managing director Ian Dyson thought the availability of three stock vehicles was too good to miss.

"We are currently expanding our fleet to 70 vehicles and are actively negotiating a 20-vehicle order for 1993 which will be placed shortly but we were offered an excellent deal from Volvo Finance and it was an opportunity we couldn't turn down," he said.

The new Volvos join the unique Atlantean single-deck conversion as the only single deckers in a predominantly double-deck fleet. Four similar conversions with East Lancashire EL2000 bodywork will also be completed next year.

Sheffield Omnibus expanding fleet

BUS

Omnibus to run ex-SYT service free

BECAUSE of a curious anomaly in regulations, a new service extension which replaces a South Yorkshire Transport withdrawal will be operated free for five weeks by Sheffield Omnibus, as traffic commissioner's discretion is not available to cover partial service withdrawals.

This week the independent has added a one-mile extension into Bevan Way Chapeltown, utilising a 12-minute layover to replace two buses per hour cut by South Yorkshire Transport - its main competitor .

"We have been told that, unless there is support from the local council and the PTE, the commissioner cannot grant an immediate replacement until the 42 days are up," commercial director Mike Armstrong said. "An extreme case would be when a five-minute service was replaced by one per day but, unless the whole registration is surrendered, someone else cannot step in and take the service over."

The company claims that hardship would have been caused to elderly passengers on the SYT 77/80 routes if only one out of three buses per hour remained.

Omnibus' 76 route has now been extended three times an hour but carries passengers free.

"We probably run more buses in Chapeltown now than SYT does. If we waited six weeks the passengers just won't be there," Mr Armstrong said. CBW

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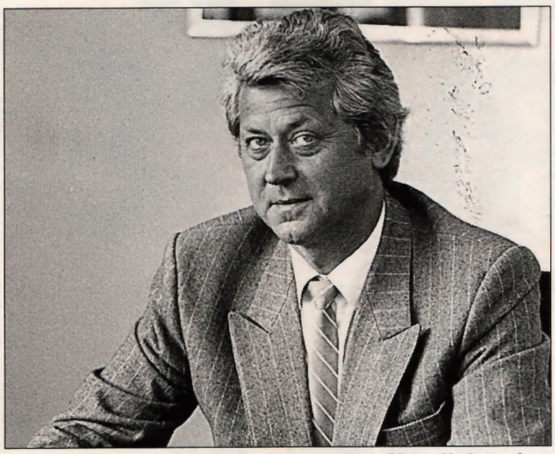
ON THE MOVE

■ BUS

Trinity group wins £37.4m export order



Trinity Holdings chairman Geoff Hollyhead

DENNIS parent company, Trinity Holdings, has received a major boost in the wake of last month's successful Stock Exchange flotation. It has a £37.4 million export order for 2,500 bus body kits to be supplied by its Duple (Metsec) subsidiary to Sri Lanka.

The two-year contract is part of the Sri Lankan Government programme under which buses are being purchased on concessionary terms for supply to private bus operators and follows a contract for 600 Duple (Metsec) buses delivered recently

Finance has been arranged through Midland Bank plc to Bank of Ceylon and includes £26.95 million Export Credit Guarantee Department (ECGD) supported buyer credit and £10.5 million deposit funded by a short term syndicated loan led by Midland Bank Aval Ltd.

By Mike Morgan

The bus bodies will be fitted to Tata and Isuzu chassis. Supplied in kit form, they will be assembled by Sri Lankan bodybuilders, La Tec Engineering and Management Services (Private) Ltd. Technical support and specialist equipment will be provided by Duple (Metsec).

Trinity Holdings chairman, Geoff Hollyhead said: "This order represents a major export boost for the UK bus industry and reflects the competitive product engineering standards being achieved by the Trinity Holdings group.

The order should make Duple (Metsec) the largest UK-based supplier of bus bodies in 1993."

● Tata is one of India's largest industrial companies with bus production plants in Jamshedphur and Pune plus an assembly operation in Malaysia. Although Daimler-Benz has a stake in the company, Tata-built engines and gearboxes are used in the company's single-deck buses and coaches. Output for 1991/2 is expected to be 15,000.

Isuzu is one of Japan's largest bus producers with annual output exceeding 8,000 vehicles, including midi- and minibuses. Half go for export - some through CKD assembly operations in India and South America.

■ BUS

KMB tackles emissions

HONG KONG bus company, Kowloon Motor Bus (KMB), has launched its first "Environmental Protection Bus" - a double decker fitted with Gardner's environmentally friendly 275 bhp LG1200 diesel engine.

The air-conditioned Dennis Dragon is part of an intensive campaign tackling the problems facing bus operators in the colony.

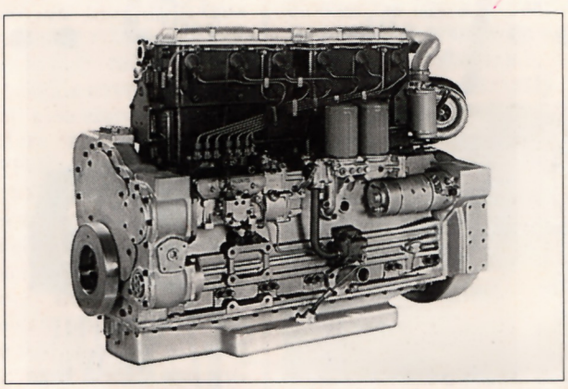
Charles Lui, KMB general manager, said: "Being the largest bus operator in Hong Kong, KMB had to take up its social responsibility and support environment protection.

"In the future KMB will substitute more environmentally friendly engines for existing engines to reduce excessive emission."

Gardner has supported the campaign and Peter Whitaker, Gardner's general manager, was invited to the launch ceremony in Hong Kong which included "swearing in" 100 "Environmental Protection Elites" led by Aaron Kwok, a locally famous pop star.

The Elites will help KMB monitor vehicles with excessive emissions, the cleanliness of bus interiors as well as reminding passengers of no smoking regulations inside the buses.

● Gardner is part of the Perkins Group, a business owned by the Varity Corporation of North America.



Gardner LG1200 diesel engine

■ COACH AND BUS

Javelin sharpens its European sales drive

DENNIS is to step up its export drive into Europe by building a left-hand-drive Javelin coach chassis.

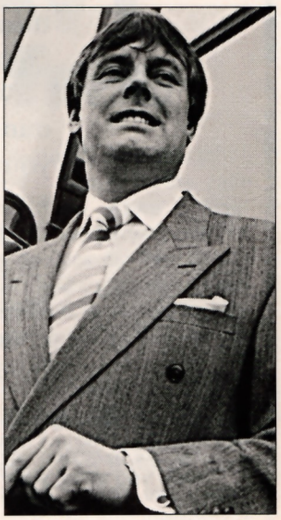
The Javelin GX chassis is due to be sent over to Valkenwaard, Holland to be bodied by Berkhof within the next few weeks. Dennis expects to have a fully-built vehicle available as a demonstrator in Holland by early next year.

Berkhof is also Dennis' preferred bodybuilder for its Dart midibus chassis, the first left-hand-drive version of which has now been sold to Dutch operator NZH, and its single-deck Lance citybus chassis, which is just about to be made available as a left-hand-drive demonstrator (*Coach and Bus Week* October 31).

Dennis sales and marketing director, Vernon Edwards, who is co-ordinating the Guildford company's export drive, said the exact specification of the body to be fitted on Javelin was yet to be agreed with Berkhof. But he was hoping to be able to fit the 500 Series dual purpose coach body, which Berkhof is currently selling in France: "I would like to get that body for the Dutch market, where it is not currently available."

Once bodied the Javelin would be aimed at the small but growing Shuttle Bus market in the Benelux countries. Specific Shuttle Buses - well appointed, stylish coaches aboard which operators often offer passengers daily newspapers and coffee - are already marketed by Bova through its low-floor line Futura, SMIT on DAF's new SB225 dual-purpose underframe, and Berkhof on Volvo.

All of these vehicles were on display at last month's Autobus RAI show in Maastricht, where Dennis also showed its left-hand-drive Dart. Mr Edwards said



Vernon Edwards

the show "was very encouraging for us, with lots of interest in our exhibits. Although we didn't take any firm orders, apart from signing the NZH contract on our stand, we're confident that an order for Dart will be forthcoming." CBW

■ COACH AND BUS

British-built PSV sales up 9.4%

By Mike Morgan

BRITISH-built PSV sales are up by 9.4 per cent and imports up 3.2 per cent, according to the latest SMMT coach and bus registration figures. But that's before the inflationary influence of Black Wednesday percolates through the system, pushing prices up by around £15,000 on a £100,000 imported coach.

On the year-to-date figures 107 more PSVs have hit the road - that's 6.3 per cent up on 1991. Dennis continues to take the biggest share of this growth with an additional 178 vehicles moving market penetration from one-in-five to almost one-in-three vehicle sales.

Although Volvo's market has dropped back by 150 vehicles so far this year, the decline was arrested in October with sales of UK, Swedish and Austrian-built products equalling the combined Leyland/Volvo figure for the same month last year. There are two clearly-defined trends - sales of double-deck buses are in decline as sub-10-metre single deckers continue to find favour.

Optare's Spectra is the only double deck on an upward curve. Launched just 12-months ago, a dozen of the DAF DB250-based vehicles have been registered. Meanwhile Leyland Olympians continue to hold steady at 145 compared with 144, while Volvo D10Ms are down from 35 to nine, Scania N113DRs down from 68 to 43 and Dennis Dominators are down from 46 to eight.

Taking Volvo B6 and Dennis Dart-sized vehicles out of the equation not only shows Volvo's dominance of the full-size market (over 16 tonnes GVW), but exposes the Dennis dependence on the midibus sector.

Volvo has 57.2 per cent of the full-size market with 633 vehicles in the year to date. Of these 343 were B10M or D10M and 290 Leyland Tiger, Olympian, or Lynx. Meanwhile Dennis has 56 over 16-tonne GVW coaches and buses out of 532 total registrations during 1992 - the remainder are mainly Darts.

The long-awaited Volvo response to the all-conquering Dart, its B6, is included in the overall registration totals. Two Austrian-built B6s were registered last month, bringing the total for this promising newcomer up to three.

Full-size coach registrations accounted for 55 per cent of the Volvo year-to-date total last year. This year it is 62 per cent, but the Swedish giant's market share has slowed from 68.8 per cent to 59.4 per cent when total full-size coach numbers have responded to a 5.7 per cent rise. Scania, DAF and Dennis shared the benefits, as did Setra with 23 against 18, and MAN up from three to eight.

Although October bucked the trend with a 32.1 per cent dive, this was just nine coaches out of an annual total that looks set to break through the 700 barrier. Last year's depressed sales saw 738 coach registrations - down from 945 in 1990 and almost half 1989's 1,402.

Full-size local service buses are down 17.5 per cent from 514 to 424 so far this year with double decks taking the brunt of the decline while operators turn to small single decks for new vehicles. DAF-based buses, spearheaded by Optare-bodied Delta and Spectra, are the UK's second favourite bus behind Volvo despite a hiccup during October.

Compared with 1991 when October was up on September, 1992 signals a note of caution for those seeing recovery in sight. PSV registrations during October 1992 are down by eight on those recorded during September 1992. CBW

COACH AND BUS REGISTRATIONS

	October		Year to date			
	1992	1991	1992	%	1991	%
Volvo	63	63	651	36.3	801	47.5
Dennis	47	16	532	29.7	354	21
DAF	6	8	185	10.3	121	7.2
Scania	20	25	147	8.2	130	7.7
Optare	6	11	105	5.9	110	6.5
MAN	0	0	17	0.9	15	0.9
Renault	0	0	16	0.9	0	0
Duple	0	0	3	0.2	5	0.3
Iveco	0	0	3	0.2	1	0.1
Other British	2	0	2	0.1	5	0.3
Other imports	5	7	132	7.4	144	8.5
TOTAL	149	130	1793	100	1686	100

The above table details all vehicles on designated PSV underframes registered last month in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and Channel Islands
Source: SMMT

FULL-SIZE COACH REGISTRATIONS

	October		Year to date			
	1992	1991	1992	%	1991	%
Volvo	12	18	406	59.4	444	68.8
Scania	4	5	84	12.3	46	7.1
DAF	0	3	79	11.6	57	8.8
Dennis	0	0	29	4.2	22	3.4
Others	3	2	85	12.4	77	11.9
TOTAL	19	28	683	100	646	100

FULL-SIZE BUS REGISTRATIONS

	October		Year to date			
	1992	1991	1992	%	1991	%
Volvo	49	44	227	53.5	315	61.2
DAF	6	5	106	25	64	12.5
Scania	16	20	63	14.9	84	16.3
Dennis	0	2	27	6.4	51	9.9
Others	0	0	1	0.2	0	0
TOTAL	71	71	424	100	514	100

* The above tables of full-size coach and bus registrations includes all PSVs over 16 tonnes GVW

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Eastbourne Buses' single decks save costs

■ BUS

Disabled face hardship

EASTBOURNE Buses' David Howard warned council officers and others at Wadham Stringer's community transport roadshow that, without financial support, bus companies would not be able to carry the disabled on commercial routes.

In a talk which pulled no punches, the municipal's managing director told delegates that all concessionary passengers were becoming unwelcome on buses because the level of financial support for carrying them was inadequate. Arm-length companies like his had to be profitable.

He added that, to develop, the bus industry could not continue to run 20-year-old vehicles.

"The move to single-deck Wadham Stringer vehicles got fuel consumption down, reduced vandalism and reduced maintenance, which meant we could afford more modern vehicles," he said. CBW

■ COACH AND BUS

Wadham chief's buy British plea

By Mark Williams

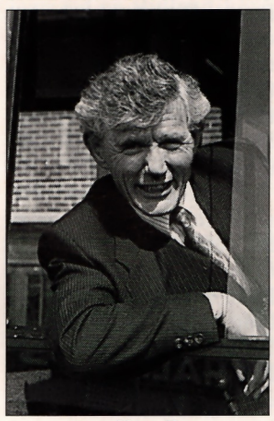
WADHAM Stringer's managing director Geoff Bailey has warned of a flood of imports if the recession deepens.

Mr Bailey called on the mobility bus industry to stick with British products, not only to bolster flagging sales but to get the very best in after-sales back-up.

"In this economic climate, it's not easy to be busy, let alone be profitable. We all need more demand, but it's simply not there," he told an audience at the launch of Wadham Stringer's new Dennis Lance-based Vanguard II.

"The decline in our manufacturing base is tragic and, once any recovery starts, there will be a tendency to suck in imports due to this decline."

Mr Bailey said that, since its takeover by Inchcape in March this year, Wadham Stringer had been able re-employ staff lost a year earlier. Major orders from the Forces and the mobility market had aided this minor recovery.



Geoff Bailey

"Inchcape has a £5 billion turnover generating £117 million profit. It demands that we make our contribution," he said.

He estimated that some 50 per cent of local authority mobility vehicles are now run with PSV certification and that demand for PSVs in this sector is growing.

It was revealed that Wadham Stringer's Winchester body is to be built on Dart chassis in the New Year for use as a feeder airport vehicle.

The company is also looking at building a Portsdown with centre door on Dennis Dart chassis, and the Wessex II on Mercedes 811 chassis cowl in March.

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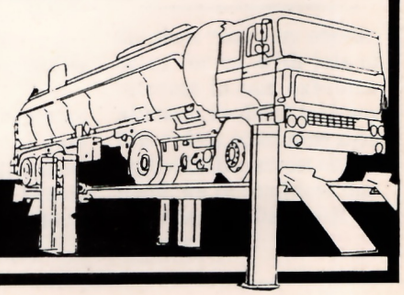

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Electronic info 'may not be viable' - study

A STUDY from Colquhoun Transportation Planning has warned that advanced electronic bus passenger information systems may not be commercially viable. CTP surveyed bus passengers in Leeds using stated preference techniques. Passengers were willing to pay just 1.5p more for their journey to have information at stops. The findings of the research appear to contradict expectations of London Transport for its Countdown system.

LT is predicting the £1.4million real-time system now being tested on CentreWest's busy 18 route from Sudbury to King's Cross will generate an extra £250,000 revenue in its first year. A further study from CTP will establish how effective information systems are in wooing motorists out of their car and on to buses.

■ HAMPSHIRE County Council has ordered a real-time bus information system for Southampton. The system, called ROMANSE, is being funded as part of the EC's DRIVE initiative.

ROMANSE stands for Road Management Systems for Europe. It will be installed on one main corridor into the city centre from Swathling and Portswood. Up to 70 buses on nine routes run by Southampton Citybus and Solent Blueline will be covered.

The contract has been placed with GEC Transport Automation. First stage is to install small roadside beacons, location devices on buses and a radio link into the control centre. By next summer, real-time information display signs will be installed at bus stops along the route.

■ MERSEYSIDE PTE, now called Merseytravel, has commissioned a strategic review of its operations from MVA Systematica aimed at developing a Merseytravel Passenger Transport Information System (PTIS). The wide-ranging review will include pre-paid ticketing systems and concessionary fares.

Key proposals from Buchanan

■ PARK-AND-RIDE schemes and a network of priority Red Routes are the key proposals of a study by Colin Buchanan and Partners for Dorset County Council. The £90,000 study was commissioned by the county in a bid to reduce traffic congestion by promoting public transport.

The park-and-ride services recommended for Bournemouth and Poole would be funded by increased parking charges. The report also recommends more frequent bus services.

■ McCARTHY and Partners of Dublin in association with Halcrow Fox and Associates have been appointed by Dun Laoghaire Corporation to undertake traffic and urban conservation studies for a traffic management and conservation plan for the town centre.

■ CLEVELAND Transit and North East Bus have commissioned MVA to advise on reimbursement arrangements for concessionary fares in Langbaurgh, Middlesbrough and Stockton. The previous free scheme was replaced by a 10 pence flat fare earlier this year. A new reimbursement scheme is due to be introduced in spring 1993.

■ THE Department of Transport has commissioned Transport Planning Associates to carry out its two-yearly study on the number of commuter and tourist coaches and other public transport vehicles moving around London. The study will include local bus services operated by or under contract to LT and is expected to last six months.

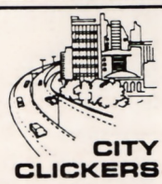
■ AFTER a study by Transport Planning Associates, Cleveland County Council is to begin work on the implementation of measures to create the first priority 'green route' for buses in Middlesbrough. Junction improvement schemes and the extension of the SCOOT traffic control system are the first stages. Improved bus shelters will also be installed.

■ PRESTON-BASED Transport Advisory Services is currently carrying out quality audits for two local bus companies and one PTE. The audits involve mystery shopping bus services from the passenger's point of view. TAS has also started work on a new study for the Department of Transport on bus services in London, which will include work on road pricing.

Videos to back safety campaign

TRANSPORT video production company TJI Communications has made a series of programmes to support a new safety campaign launched by London Buses Ltd. Covering a range of subjects from driving techniques and safe working in garages to assault avoidance and accident reporting, the videos are being shown to LBL staff under the theme Think Safe, Be Safe. They focus on the knock-on effect safety has on business success.

Consultancy Services is a new regular feature in *Coach and Bus Week*. It will be published every month and we welcome information from consultants involved in all aspects of coach and bus operation and supply. Press releases should be addressed to editor Mike Morgan, *Coach and Bus Week*, EMAP Response Publishing, Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough, PE1 1DS, Fax 0733 62656. To advertise in this feature ring Louise Harrison on 0733 898111 or Fax 0733 62656.



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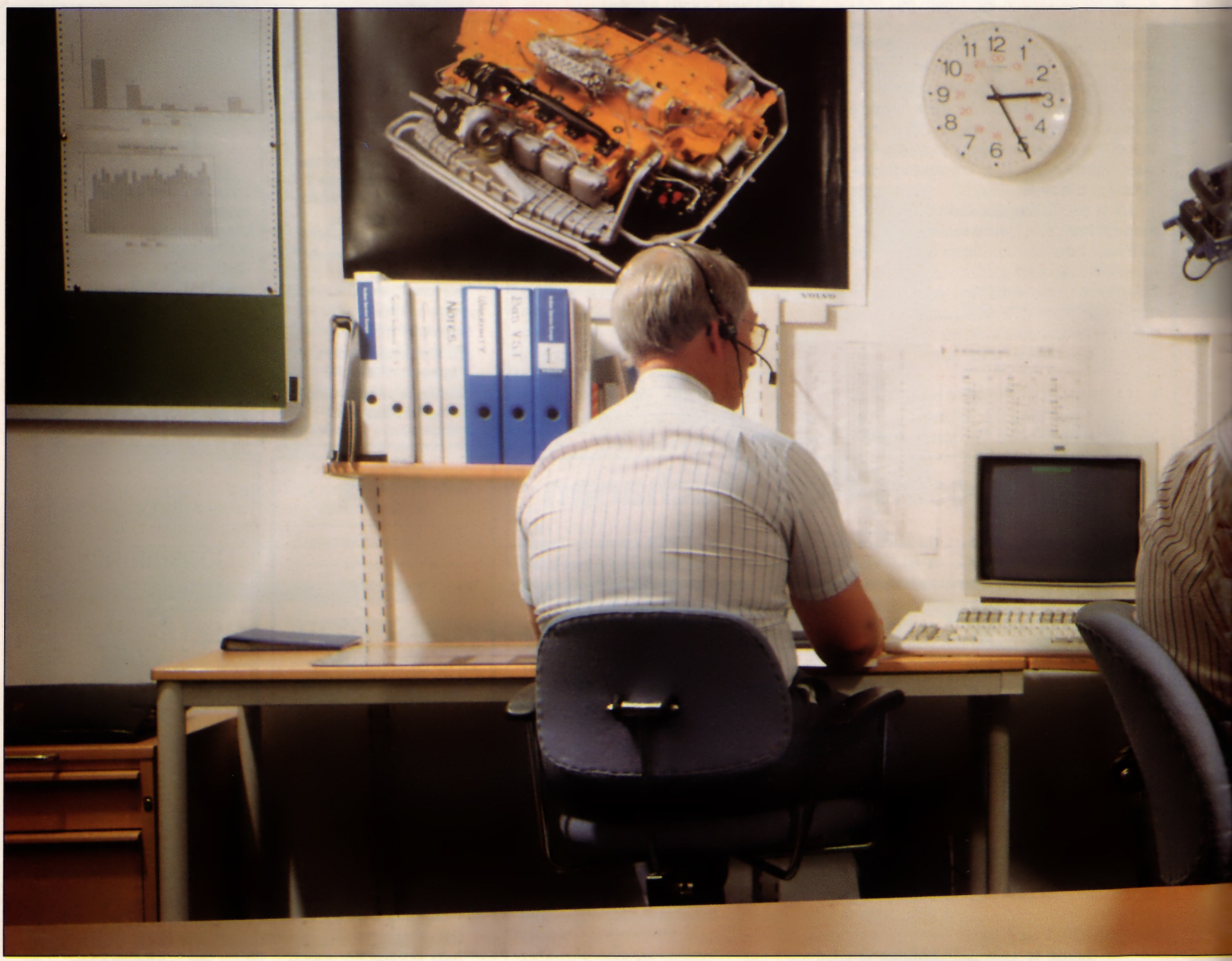

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Are business/educational packages exempted by EC?

Q Is it correct that packages for business and educational purposes are exempt from the requirements of the EC Directive on tour packaging and bonding?

TB, Bournemouth

A The preamble to the Directive certainly makes it clear that it is aimed at tourism-based packages. This objective is also made clear by the words defining what constitutes a 'package' for the purposes of the Regulation.

It is the combination of at least two of:

a) Transport;

b) Accommodation;

c) Other tourist services not ancillary to transport or accommodation and accounting for a significant proportion of the package.

Although perhaps appearing insignificant to anyone without an understanding of the law, the fact that item c) does not just refer to 'tourist services...etc', but is prefaced by the word 'other', is highly important.

The explanation is that the use of the word 'other' in group c) generates an implication that, for the purposes of interpreting this Regulation, item a) is tourist transport and item b) is tourist accommodation.

Unless the contract terms allow some special concessions to one or the other of the parties (eg on the happening of some occurrence) both parties are bound to totally honour the terms of the contract

I, therefore, believe that non-tourism packages of the sort that you suggest will not be caught by this Directive, even though there is no specific clause in the Directive making this clear.

It will, of course, fall to the courts to make the ultimate ruling on both the interpretation of the Directive and on questions of fact as to whether a particular package was touristic or educational.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questions on any aspect of coach or bus operation that is giving you problems should be sent to: Marksman, Coach and Bus Week, Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough PE1 1DS or by fax: 0733 62656.

Q We have contracts with British Coal that require three months notice on either side. But for Michael Heseltine's U-turn, some of them would have been finished with only a few days notice. What can we do if, or more probably when, we are faced with this again?

WKL, South Yorkshire

A Unless the contract terms allow some special concessions to one or the other of the parties, for example: on the happening of some occurrence; both parties are bound to totally honour the terms of the contract.

When one party indicates to the other that he is proposing to not fully observe the terms this is called a repudiatory breach of contract.

If the innocent party, by word or deed, accepts the repudiatory breach of the other side, the legal effect is as if he had agreed to alter or waive the affected contract term. Consequently, he has no right to compensation for breach of contract.

If you simply refuse to accept the repudiatory breach, the contract will remain in being, and enforceable. But of course, you must perform your part of it, ie running the vehicles required over the correct routes and at the correct times - even though they are running empty!

In practice, you would advise British Coal in writing, that you did not accept their repudiatory breach and that you planned to continue to operate the contracts.

Faced with no alternative to paying you for no useful purpose it is almost certain that they would then seek discussion with you to compensate for their planned breach of contract.

But should the timescale make this course impossible, do not hesitate to continue to operate the contracts, albeit with empty vehicles, if you want to collect your redundancy pay.

The moment you cease to perform your side of the contract you may be deemed to have accepted the repudiatory breach, thus terminating the contract and leaving you empty handed.

Q How can we discover the VAT inclusive and zero rated elements necessary to complete our VAT Tour Operators' Margin Scheme calculations when we have bought a ferry and accommodation package from a tour wholesaler?

KLN, Humberside

A Try asking for the breakdown! For obvious reasons, tour wholesalers would not wish to disclose what they pay for the component parts of the packages that they sell on. But this is not, in any case, what you need to know.

To do your margin scheme calculations you simply need to know what percentage of your payment to the wholesaler was for zero-rated ferries and non-EC accommodation, and what percentage comprised the VAT inclusive remainder.

Many tour wholesalers will give these percentages - some even put them on the invoice. If, however, this information is not forthcoming you will need to agree with your local VAT office how this cost is to be apportioned.

Q Can a passenger use a folding courier seat?

PW, Cambs

A No. What the industry colloquially calls a courier seat is defined in regulations as a 'crew seat'. This is perhaps more explicit as to its permitted use.

I am unaware of any test case of who counts as crew for this purpose, but it might be reasonable to conclude it was someone being paid to be there, not someone who was paying for the privilege

Indeed, the Regulations require a notice 'For Crew Use Only' to be displayed on, or near to, such seats.

I am unaware of any test case of who counts as crew for this purpose, but it might be reasonable to conclude that it was someone being paid to be there, and certainly not someone who was paying for the privilege.

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War of the words

THE psychological battle of words between competitors in Sheffield continues. Not to be outdone by South Yorkshire Transport, and anxious to prove that the deputy traffic commissioner's assertions were wrong, Sheffield Omnibus bought three off-the-peg new buses last week and would have bought more if there had been any.

With the exception of the transmission and, of course, the livery, the independent's purchases are identical to those of its competitor, right down to the seating moquette.

Asked whether the company was following the good example of its superiors, or preparing itself for a sell off, MD Ian Dyson rejected the inferences.

"We think it could be useful to acquaint ourselves fully with the buses of our competitor, so that we know what we are getting when we submit a bid for SYT or at least part of it!" he said.

Hush your mouth, minister...

MINISTER for Public Transport Roger Freeman had to gag himself during an uncharacteristic outburst about Eurocrats at the recent BCC Conference: "I really do get annoyed when we are lectured by Brussels about being good Europeans. We play the game and it's about time some of the others did," he said, then added: "But I better stop there or I'll be getting a Telex from the foreign secretary..."

■ CentreWest managing director Peter Hendy had the conference laughing with some irreverent comments about London Bus timetables: "Look at this," he said, pointing to a complex map of London bus routes. "It was written by the knowledgeable for the knowledgeable."

■ More from Peter Hendy, this time on bus destination blinds: "Some of them represent the triumph of the destination blind makers' eye for economy over common sense," he said. And there's more, commenting on vandalism at bus stops: "Frankly, I don't blame yobs for smashing up the timetables. They bear so little resemblance to reality."

■ Ulsterbus managing director Ted Hesketh said the industry may be able to get away with only one third of the bus streamlining: "When we surveyed our passengers' views after one route improvement, their estimate of the time saving on the journey was three times the real saving."

■ Norman Hogg MP, describing the final stages of a Parliamentary Bill: "After that, it is signed by the Queen, who is well known for taking the Number 11 bus to Whitehall..."

We tell Aussie where to go

UK operators who thought the BCC Conference at Eastbourne was a little too far to go didn't have quite such a strong argument as John Usher, who did attend.

John's company, Croydon Bus Service, viewed the conference with some importance. Surprising, really, since the Croydon Bus Service in question is based at Melbourne, in Australia.

Despite the 12,000-mile trip, John is convinced he is closer to the British bus industry than many would imagine: "It's a great fraternity," he told us.

"The new Australian government is talking about privatisation, so there are a number of lessons to be learned from the UK."

John went on a tour of operators after the show, in the company of a man experienced in hot competition, Mark Thomas of Western Travel.

Incidentally, he wouldn't have attended the conference had it not been for an article he read in a UK magazine... this magazine, to which he subscribes.

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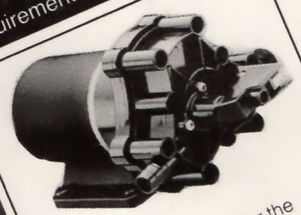

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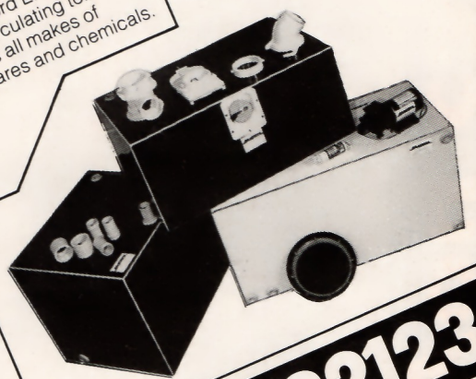

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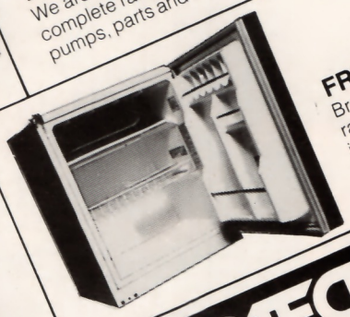

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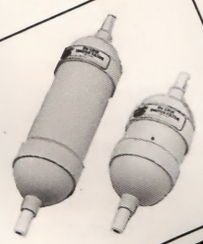

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UK's biggest bus priority programme launched

London's priority traffic routes - the red routes - are designed to reduce congestion which is costing £10 billion a year. Jonathan Bray examines the implications

LONDON is to get the biggest network of bus priority measures that the country has ever seen. And this isn't just an idealistic plan with no funding. The Government is committed to paying for it.

Many of London's major thoroughfares are to become priority routes, or 'Red Routes'. The aim is to create order out of the chaos of London's congested major roads. Illegal parking will be eliminated. Buses will be prioritised. Delivery vehicles will deliver when and where it is most appropriate. To make the Red Routes work, a Traffic Director, Derek Turner, has been appointed and encouragingly for bus operators he sees the Red Routes as helping to deliver a new 'golden age' for the bus.

Residents resent loss of parking

Sceptics are directed to the evidence of the pilot Red Route, the A1 corridor from Highgate to the Commercial Road. There a Red Route speeded up London Northern's route 43 on the A1 by 29 per cent in the evening peak. 8,700 more passengers a week now use the route. An 8.8 per cent increase in patronage set against a 2.6 per cent decline London-wide. Cashing in on the success an express service, the X43, has now been introduced. It's early days yet, but LBL describe passenger response as 'encouraging'.

Cashing in on 8,700 extra passengers

Satisfied with the success of the pilot, the Government has now issued its plans for a London-wide network of Red Routes, which it wants in place by 1997. It will be up to local authorities to draw up the detailed plans for their sections of the Red Route network. Mr Turner will guide, and ultimately sanction those plans. It is now that the battle for the soul of the Red Routes will be joined in earnest. Red Routes have proved highly controversial. Traders blame them for lost business, as passing car trade is wiped out. Residents resent the loss of their parking spaces. While the powerful haulage industry is concerned about delivery vehicles. The coach and bus industry will have to fight its corner to make sure that it gets as much free bus priority infrastructure as possible.

Fortunately, both Mr Turner and his boss, Steve Norris, London's transport minister, are alive to the potential of the bus. Mr Turner points to his 'draft network plan', issued on October 19, for the Red Routes which makes bus priority the largest single item that the local Red Route plans will have to address. In drawing up their Red Routes, local authorities will be required to consult with bus operators.

In addition, each link in the Red Route network will have a steering group which will bring together the local authority, the police, LT and bus operators.

Mr Turner is keen to stress that for him, there's more to bus priority than just bus lanes. "The full range of bus priority measures will be considered and available for use on the Red Routes, including selective vehicle detection, relocating bus stops, better bus bays, and bus priority at traffic signals." He is also encouraging LT to look at themeing the bus infrastructure on the priority routes. Possibly with a common livery for shelters, vehicles and so on.

David Sayburn, the General Manager of LBL's Central Traffic Division, says that LBL is already very aware of what the Traffic

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Director can do for them. "We were involved in the detailed discussion on the pilot Red Route, and we plan to be very involved in the creation of the rest of the network. If the route 43 experience is recreated on other priority routes we would be looking to plough back the savings into better services. Perhaps through more frequent services, or through more express routes, like the X43."

Coaches haven't been forgotten. Mr Turner sees an opportunity to rationalise and order provision for coaches in London. "I recognise the benefits that coaches bring to London. For example, there is the opportunity to provide bays for coaches to load and unload, at key locations. I want to bring order tot he highway system, and make the most efficient use of that highway system. The pilot has shown that this brings benefits for all road users."

Later this year, a new layer of priority routes, in addition to the Red Routes, will be announced which will be solely concerned with bus priority. The original Red Route network was not conceived with the major bus route corridors in mind. The new bus priority routes will correct that error. Proposals will also be announced for central London, which was left out of the original Red Route plans because of fears that continuous red routes, right across the capital, might encourage more people to try and drive through central London.

There's more to bus priorities than bus lanes

Mr Turner is reluctant to be drawn on the implications of the Red Routes for deregulation. However, Government thinking must be that the Red Routes are a cost-effective way of giving deregulation in the capital a flying start. But to get the most out of this 'free gift' from the Department of Transport, bus operators will have to fight their corner.

There will be fierce debates over how the Red Route template is applied to London's high streets. Bus lanes are not universally popular with traders, or with car-owning residents.

The Red Route experiment is already attracting interest from across the country. If the Traffic Director, the bus and coach industry, and local authorities in London can make the Red Routes work, then the pressure for Red Routes for regional towns and cities will become irresistible.

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GM Buses has never allowed tobacco ads

From Dr Alan R Westwell

SIR

In your issue of October 3 you carried a piece relating to the administration of Primesight, also known as Premier Bus Advertising Limited.

There was a clear inference that a decision by this company to ban tobacco advertising caused the insolvency of Primesight/Premier.

Your readers should be aware that GMB has never permitted the advertising of tobacco on its buses and so the suggestion that Primesight was "tipped over the brink by GMB's decision to ban tobacco advertising" is clearly incorrect.

Moreover the High Court found in favour of GMB earlier this year in a case relating to this point.

Dr Alan R Westwell
Chief executive & managing director
GM Buses
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Insurance premiums are a

From George Peach

SIR

Probably our largest non-production overheads are in our business concentrated in the area of motor vehicle fleet premiums.

In recent years our accident record has been deteriorating due to many factors some more in control than others.

- An increasing accident frequency - the average number of incidents per vehicle reported by the company to insurers each year;
- Deteriorating average claims cost per vehicle - the total paid and outstanding third party claims liability divided by our number of vehicles;
- An increasingly litigious society - people are more aware of what can be claimed and are more likely to pursue us, many times via solicitors, for injury or damage to their property;
- The cost of settling an injured party's claims and repairs to our own vehicles where we are at fault and unable to recover damage costs.

In an effort to stem the escalating cost of insurance premiums we have decided to increase the level of self insurance carried by the company.

This results in many claims formerly entirely paid by our insurers being paid in full by the company.

This movement away from the more conventional insurance route has caused us to examine more closely our accident history, in view of the direct cost implications to the company of the self insurance we have adopted.

The initial statistical analysis was put together by Jardine Insurance Brokers - our professional insurance and risk management advisers - and SMTI - who handle all claims on our behalf and will be a name well known to many of you as they have a wealth of experience in the bus claims field.

The findings communicated to senior depot and head office staff at two seminars run by JIB/SMTI in July provided some interesting and thought-provoking figures. Among many statistics which the report provided two key figures stood out:

- The average cost per vehicle at Yorkshire Traction is 15 per cent higher than in an average of three comparable operators;
- The number of claims made against Tracky vehicles is 22 per cent higher than in the same three companies.

Leaving aside the administrative and downtime fac-

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tors involved in any accident, there are clearly massive cost implications in those statistics.

If the claims history follows the same pattern as in recent years this could cost the company in excess of £300,000. This is £300,000 that comes straight off the bottom line, affecting all of us and much of the cost is avoidable.

The message is clear. The company can and must improve its accident record. Through JIB and SMTI, depots are going to be supplied with additional information to manage the motor vehicle accident risk better.

Staff have been asked in the October issue of *Tracky News* to consider carefully steps to improve our record. Meanwhile we plan to monitor and tackle this important problem.

George Peach
Commercial director
Yorkshire Traction
Sheffield Road
Barnsley
South Yorkshire

The editor says...

■ The Coach and Bus Week Telma Safety Awards is the ideal vehicle for a company like Yorkshire Traction.

By offering drivers incentives through an awards scheme such as this the effect on the company's claims experience should be positive.

In addition, drivers with excellent records can be encouraged and the publicity gained used to encourage others to follow the same example.

A copy of the entry form is in the post to Mr Peach and other operators are urged to encourage entry for either (or both) of the two schemes which aim to identify the top operator and the top driver .

Enthusiasts our bread and butter

From Trevor Jones

SIR

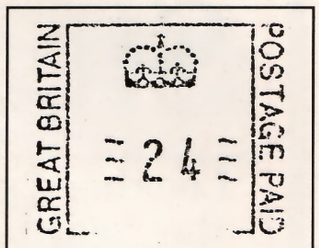
Like Chris Godbold (Coach and Bus Week, October 24) we at Selkent are somewhat bemused by your attitude to bus enthusiasts.

Public Transport needs all the friends it can get and I assure you that we at Selkent value the support we receive from enthusiasts very highly indeed. After all, their pound coins are worth 100p exactly like those of other passengers.

It is because we value such support that we try to return the compliment by sending what we hope are interesting vehicles to bus rallies and by supplying information to LOTS etc.

However, there is one type of enthusiast that we are NOT keen on! He (or she) writes to us demanding information on certain vehicles, or routes and then arrives to photograph them BY CAR! Subject to that caveat, keep on being enthusiastic - we're enthusiastic about you too!

Trevor Jones
Marketing manager
Selkent
Lewisham
London



Write to: The Editor, *Coach and Bus Week*, EMAP Response Publishing Ltd, Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough, PE1 1DS, or by fax: 0733 62656

The editor is always pleased to receive letters for publication in *Coach And Bus Week* and will, if requested, publish these anonymously. But please attach your name and address for our own information.

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Stealthbus!

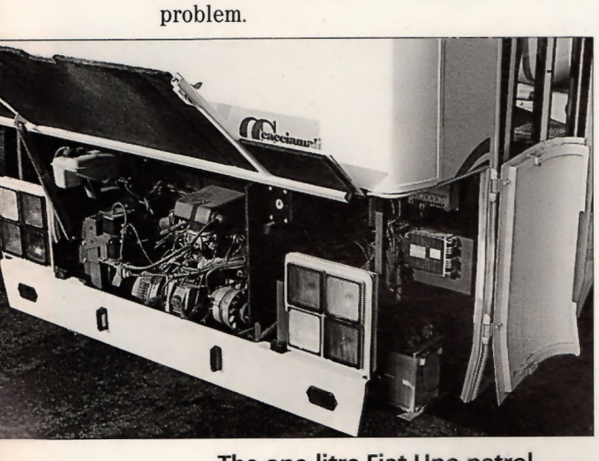
External appearance is identical to a conventional vehicle

Lockheed prefected the stealth bomber, but Iveco is the first bus maker to build a vehicle which can penetrate even the most environmentally-sensitive area without trace. Richard Simpson reports

THE long-awaited Iveco hybrid bus has finally made it to Britain, albeit in left-hand-drive, prototype form. Iveco says its diesel/electric vehicles will offer the carrying capacity of a conventional bus, while each having less environmental impact than a single private car. As far as the person in the street is concerned, they are virtually sound and odour-free in operation .

Increasing pressure to protect Italy's historic city centres from the ravages of air pollution have provided the impetus in developing the hybrid bus, which offers most of the advantages of electric traction without the need for expensive, unsightly and sometimes dangerous overhead wires and other infrastructure. The company has been working on the concept of a hybrid (internal combustion engine powered generator/electric traction motor) for years, with a diesel/electric vehicle being first tested in 1978.

The 1978 vehicle had an electric traction motor fed by a diesel generator, operating at variable speeds depending on the power required. This bus also carried a bank of batteries so that it could be operated solely on electric power where pollution was a severe problem.



The one-litre Fiat Uno petrol engine is encapsulated

Iveco has since refined the hybrid bus concept to the extent where a much smaller and less environmentally-damaging engine can be used. The AltroBus, a prototype of which has just been demonstrated to *Coach and Bus Week*, has been jointly developed by Iveco, Asnaldo and the research department of Genoa University.

On a conventional vehicle, the engine provides power and drive. But the wide demands on the power unit, from full-throttle pull-aways to braking on the over-run, make emissions difficult to control.

The AltroBus shown to *Coach and Bus Week* is based on the conventional DailyBus. But the AltroBus' power source is a rear mounted one-litre petrol engine from a Fiat Uno car, which drives a dc generator at a governed 3,000 rpm. It has been tuned to run efficiently at this speed, exhausts through a three-way catalytic converter and is enclosed in a soundproofed compartment, making it less environmentally damaging than a small car. Weight of engine and generator is 140 kg - providing a saving on the weight of a full-size diesel engine, and some compensation for the weight of the electric traction system.

Although the generator drives the traction motor directly, back-up power is provided by banks of underfloor-mounted batteries. These provide additional power for pulling away and climbing gradients, and serve to store accumulated excess energy generated when the vehicle descends gradients or slows. The front-mounted traction motor drives through the existing DailyBus transmission, which is locked in third gear.

In areas of extreme environmental sensitivity, the petrol engine can be switched off, and the vehicle run on its batteries alone.

Although the first AltroBus vehicles to go into service in Britain will be based on the DailyBus, the same concept has been applied to full-size vehicles.

Using a 12-metre TurboCity chassis, the bigger vehicle is powered by a two-litre diesel engine from a Fiat Croma car. The exhaust is cleaned by a particulate filter. Like the smaller vehicle, it has undergone a demanding test programme in the streets of Genoa, which are heavily congested and have many steep gradients.

From the passengers' point of view, the buses are quiet and virtually vibration-free when compared to their conventional equivalents. Sound levels in the stark, hard trim interior of the prototype DailyBus were far lower than those of the equivalent diesel vehicle.

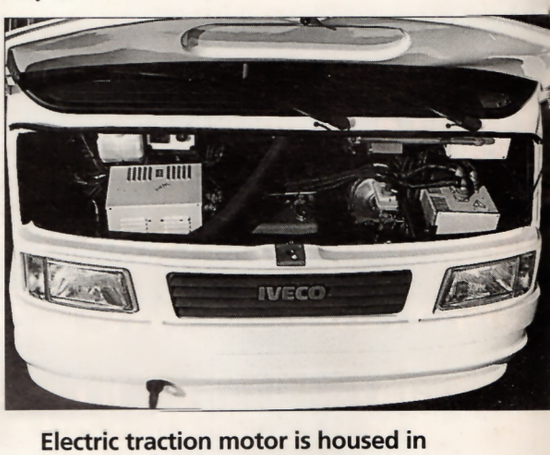
For the operator, the main drawback is cost. Iveco estimates the price of the smaller vehicle will be some two-and-a-half times that of its conventional equivalent. But the company claims that subsidies for vehicle purchase should be available to operators through Section 56 grants. Running costs are roughly similar to those of the equivalent conventional vehicle but, although the vehicles are in in some respects easier to drive, staff will still need to be trained in their operation. For instance, simultaneous operation of the accelerator and brake will cause the vehicle's electrics massive confusion as it tries to drive the motor and charge the batteries through regenerative braking at the same time.

The DailyBus hybrid vehicle will spend the rest of this month on tour in Britain, being demonstrated to operators and local authorities.

Harry Chambers, the manager of the Iveco Ford bus division, said: "The hybrid vehicle creates less pollution and is more environmentally friendly than a conventional vehicle powered entirely by a large diesel engine.

"It is also more environmentally-friendly than the trolley-bus because, ultimately, the power source for a trolley-bus network is a power station. At the moment, there is a costly penalty for purchasing hybrid vehicles but under the 1968 Transport Act there is provision for public money to be used for capital grants towards the development of public transport systems. We feel that this provision should be utilised to meet the difference between the cost of a conventional bus and a hybrid bus."

Harry Blundred's Transit Holdings is tipped to be the first British operator to try the AltroBus, with demonstrations planned in Oxford and Portsmouth *(Coach and Bus Week*, July 4).



Electric traction motor is housed in the front compartment

Hughes DAF

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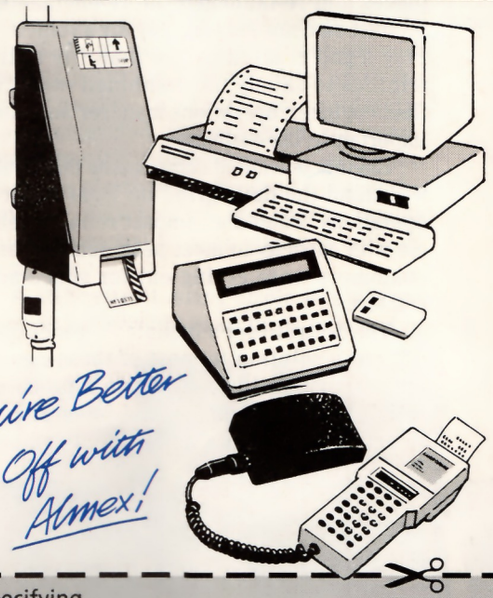

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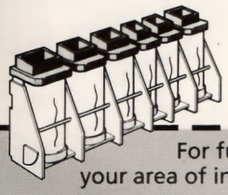

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Long, wide
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Worked hard by Ipswich Buses

Mike Morgan took to the in-service road test to exploited the potential of

IT is widely acknowledged that the bus industry owes Optare a debt of gratitude for rescuing the former-MCW MetroRider from obscurity.Designed as the bus-man's small bus, the MetroRider offered much, but suffered from some very well publicised flaws.

Nevertheless, Optare picked up the pieces and re-launched the re-engineered product on a market yearning for a vehicle to plug a gap created by the inability of the minibus to satisfy the combined needs of fleet engineer, operations manager and most importantly, the customer.

Engineers wanted components that could withstand the daily grind on local service, operations wanted a compact reliable vehicle with capacity to meet peak demand, and customers were crying out for space and comfort.

The MetroRider's technical credentials offered a solution to most of these needs. With Cummins/Allison driveline it promised reliability and economy, and integral construction promised a bus without compromise which offered improved passenger accommodation. Yet there were problems and operators unlucky enough to suffer as a consequence combined together to offer mutual aid.

Meanwhile the demise of its parent, MCW, threatened continuity of production. Then along came Optare to rescue the infant from the claws of fate. With the benefit of hindsight the 'Optare-ised' product addressed areas of concern and refined the mix to present a winning combination.

However, it emerged to a cautious welcome. No amount of window-dressing could hide a dubious past reputation and industry observers remained sceptical of the position of the product alongside the StarRider on Mercedes-Benz chassis that had done so much to establish the Optare-look.

The Leeds-based company says it has overcome the MCW problems with its welded steel frame. Sectional aluminium side panels above the skirt and glass-fibre below replace the previous arrangement. As have Optare's preference for gasket-mounted tinted side windows. The braking system and rear axle specification also received attention. However, the drive-train was retained because it is considered to be well-balanced and unstressed for a minimum 10-year life - longer is expected.

The modifications did the trick by adding to the vehicle's credentials. Sales rapidly accelerated and Optare can look back on one of its best decisions on new vehicle launches. The MetroRider is available in two lengths - 7.04 metre and 8.4 metre - and on the longer version there is the option of extra width beyond the standard 2.21 metres to 2.376 metres. Municipal, Ipswich Buses, is among the customers with a mix of 11 standard and wide MetroRiders.

Its latest order called for the largest on offer and one of these was made available for this *Coach and Bus Week* road test.

The test was in service, when we took over bus 219 for the morning.

Ipswich took to minibuses as the vehicle to develop new routes into new territory. Consequently the town retains its big-bus network with high-frequency services on the main corridors. Double decks are used predominantly, with single decks drafted in to cope with a low bridge on the Chantry Estate services. Minibus routes have been superimposed on this network.

Marketing and operations director Malcolm Robson explained: "The buses are worked hard. Not just on hilly routes penetrating narrow roads of previously unserved housing estates, but long days."

At first the minis were Dodge-based vehicles, but the system evolved whereby the 'deckers came off the road in the evening to make way for the more cost-effective small-capacity vehicles which completed their duties. All-day service soon exposed the minibus weaknesses. So with a system that made good economic and operational sense, the company looked for a suitable replacement.

Step forward the MetroRider. Gradually the peak vehicle requirement of 10 small buses for five routes was switched away from the Dodge as new vehicle replacements transformed the Ipswich fleet. Out of 90 buses, which includes the MetroRiders, only three Dodges remain.

Number 219 was slotted into the well-oiled Ipswich network to cover part of route card M94. This typical diagram takes to the road at 6.36 am and inter-works the network of services that crisscross the Suffolk town. This work terminates at 6.54 pm but the MetroRider hasn't finished yet. Its evening job ensures no time for the engine oil to cool.

Structural problems overcome

Wide body gives

, and fit for
rpose

streets of Ipswich for an e how well Optare has he MetroRider small bus

No wonder the average annual mileage for the MetroRider fleet is 55,000 miles. This high utilisation figure adds weight to the argument for new vehicles and places high demands on reliability. The only hint of trouble has been a trace of diesel contamination in the engine oil. Cummins were informed and the fuel pumps replaced by C-series models.

Fuel consumption at 11.64 mpg looks low at first glance. However, our first run soon established the severity of the demand.

Ipswich bus station, Tower Ramparts, lies at the hub of the system and we bustled in and out alternating between various services in the Ipswich style. Buses go out of town showing one service number, then all change at the terminus ready for the cross-town return to another destination requiring a different number. Consequently a bus for Swansea Avenue goes out as a 16, but returns as a 21 if it is going to Inverness Road, or a 20 if it is going to the hospital. Vehicles shuttle across town to tight timings with no more than two minutes layover between trips.

Consequently the near perfect positioning of the conventional destination blind gear was a blessing. This is one of the very few vehicles where the whole process can be completed while remaining seated.The access flaps were secured by quick release ball catches and they were light enough to be held easily.

feeling of space

Passenger impressions

One of the first things to strike fare-paying passengers was a sensible relationship between them and the driver with eye contact assured.

Once the correct money was loaded into the convenient fare box to the left of the entrance, the driver pressed the appropriate button on the Wayfarer and out popped the ticket. Being close to the steps, the coin box obstructed passenger view of the ticket being issued. Consequently there was a temptation to help by handing over the tickets. Such attempts were defeated by tickets tearing due to the angle of pull. Otherwise the machine was well positioned.

No change was needed - or given. But should an operator insist on a cash tray and change dispenser, there is sufficient room between the MetroRider cab door and the driver's seat.

Once they moved into the soft trim interior, regular minibus customers noted a feeling of space. A wide 47 cm gangway is a consequence of 880 mm seating - though wider seats are possible with the wide body. All 31 passenger seats are forward facing with minimum legroom never less than 26 cm. A luggage pen was specified behind the cab in preference to maximum seating of 33.

Integral build ensures a low first step - 26.5 cm - followed by two modest risers to the flat central gangway covered in non-slip studded rubber. There is a small seat riser towards the rear, but this presented no difficulties during the test.

Noise levels were very acceptable with a high of 76 dB(A) during normal progress. Hard acceleration raised this to 82 dB(A) and the compressor can be heard in the passenger saloon. Squeaking rear spring bushes could be heard on both 219 and a 12-month old standard width example which also suffered from squeaks from the nylon sleeve holding the roof to seat stanchions.

Ride quality was thoroughly tested on the variety of road surfaces encountered. Rear seat occupants confessed to experiencing a bouncy ride on poor roads which could also induce a noticeable sideways motion.

The network, and the timetable, is well understood by the passengers, who appeared at the appointed time at the appropriate stop for the trip back to town. This regular flow of customers was perfect for assessing the MetroRider's aptitude for hard work.

Passengers eye contact assured

Driver impressions

Although a regular driver was riding shotgun, there was no leeway for route learning, but just enough to indulge in passenger care. Tight timetables are contentious with road staff, but this bus was fully up to the task thanks to faultless automatic gearchanges and well-weighted, yet vague, power steering. Acceleration was good without being electrifying. We sped through the labyrinth of back streets and housing estates which the casual Ipswich visitor is unlikely to explore.

A 16.5-metre touring circle was a great asset as left or right-hand turns followed in ➔

Integral build allows low step

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1988 (F) LAG PANORAMIC DAF DKV 290 hp, Telma retarder, Webasto, 49 reclining seats, courier seat, centre toilet, continental door, 2 x TV/video, boiler, fridge, bunk, double glazing, carpets and curtains.

1987 (D) SCANIA K112 PLAXTON 3500. Telma retarder, 51 seats, centre toilet, video system, water boiler, double glazed with curtains, steps and cont. door.

1987 (D) LEYLAND TIGER 260 DUPLE 340. 48 recliners, rear sunken toilet, boiler, fridge, video, cont. door.

1986 (C) DAF SB2300 DHS PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200. 49 recliners, sunken toilet, single glazed.

1986 (C) VOLVO B10M CAETANO ALGARVE, 49/53 seats, centre toilet, TV and video, courier seat, blinds.

1985 (C) DAF MB 230 LAG GALAXY. High floor, 49/53 demountable, sunken rear toilet, TV & video, boiler, bunk, double glazed, Webasto, carpets & curtains, retrimmed throughout in brown. Finished in white.

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Well-balanced and unstressed Cummins/Allison driveline

Screen raked away from driver

quick succession as the route planners confronted the MetroRider with those narrow roads that would defeat a big bus.

Occasionally we needed to be conscious that this was wider than the standard vehicle and some gaps had to be approached with care.

An unobstructed view of the mirrors and forward vision through the one-piece windscreen is very good. However, here were two factors that shouted caution - a steering axle ahead of the entrance door and a lack of clear definition as to the exact position of the front nearside corner. The first factor determined that the 'screen raked away from the driver making it difficult to judge the position of the front fender.

There was no doubt that, by the end of the test, familiarity encouraged full use of the vehicle's very adequate performance and responsive braking. A combination of brake pedal-operated Telma retarder and disc brakes all-round was very effective. Mounting the handbrake forward of the T-bar gear selector presented a bit of stretch.

Despite a spacious cab floor, there was no space behind the seat, no coat hook, or place for route card/fare table. However, the Ipswich fare structure and no-change fare box linked to its compact route network alleviated most of the need. Other operators may have different requirements.

Extra slider for ventilation

Drivers reported problems with cab ventilation during the heat of the summer. It's a familiar complaint and Optare responded in familiar style following an Ipswich-inspired modification. Now MetroRiders have an extra slider in the front offside quarter light. Cab heating during winter months should not be a problem thanks to a branch from the saloon's perimeter radiator heating system.

It's amazing how key-start ignition has become more wide-spread in the bus-world. Worries of lost keys could be a nightmare but Ipswich chief engineer Terry Leeks says he has had no problems with the MetroRider fleet. However, Ipswich has the master switch moved to behind a flap in the stepwell to encourage drivers to immobilise the vehicle when left unattended.

SPECIFICATION

Vehicle:	**Optare MetroRider - long-wheelbase/wide body**
Body:	**31 seats plus 6 standees**
Price:	**from £49,000**
Engine:	**six-cylinder Cummins B series**
Power:	**115 bhp (86 kW) @ 2,500 rpm**
Torque:	**280 Lbf ft (380 Nm) @ 1,550 rpm**
Gearbox:	**Allison AT545 four speed automatic**
Retarder:	**Telma C65 - footbrake operated**
Steering:	**ZF power assisted**
Brakes:	**Front: discs Rear: discs Handbrake: spring release**
Suspension:	**Taper leaf springs front and rear**
Front axle:	**GKN S43, 3,300 kg**
Drive axle:	**GKN 18HA single reduction, 5,500 kg - ratio 3.54:1**
Tyres:	**215/75R x 17.5**

DIMENSIONS

Length:	**8.4 metres**
Width:	**2.376 metres**
Height:	**2.75 metres**
Wheelbase:	**4.75 metres**
Unladen weight:	**5,270 kg**
GVW:	**8,000 kg**

PERFORMANCE

Acceleration:	**0-30 mph - 10.5 secs 0-50 mph - 28.5 secs**
Fuel economy:	**Ipswich fleet average consumption - 11.64 mpg Test vehicle during first two months - 11 mpg**

Range at 11.64 mpg with 35 gallon fuel tank - 407.4 miles

Ipswich runs 11 MetroRiders including a 1989 MCW-built vehicle.

The test bus had covered 10,911.78 miles (17,560 km) since new.

Noise levels at 40 mph:	**Cab - 76 dB(A) Middle - 74 dB(A) Rear - 72 dB(A)**

Verdict

Optare, with its confirmed policy of exclusive products, offers buyers the opportunity to source complete vehicles from one company without recourse to separate body or chassis manufacturers. The MetroRider firmly fits into this philosophy.

It comes with a 12-month warranty which has an option to purchase extra time.

The short (7 metre) bus has up to 25 seats and the longer (8.4 metre) has up to 33 seats in either width. A further option - not included in this test - is a wide 'fastflow' entrance on the long MetroRider. This variant has found wide acceptance but seating capacity is cut by two seats - generally 29 plus luggage pen.

A further consideration is the effect of size on weight. Ipswich has narrow vehicles with the same seating layout as the test vehicle but, due to lower unladen weight, 12 rather than six standees.

Whatever the need within the 25-33 seat range, Optare has a MetroRider to suit. Our test showed that the reality has matched the potential.

With well-balanced and unstressed driveline together with integral structure, the bus-man has indeed got the small bus to match his expectations.

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BOVA

1984 **BOVA EUROPA MK III.** 53 reclining seats + courier, Webasto, radio/pa/cassette, rear continental door, MoT April 1993.

LEYLAND

1989 (F) LEYLAND TIGER (CUMMINS L10). Plaxton 3200, 6 speed ZF manual, Telma, 53 reclining seats, double glazed, radio/pa/cassette. Choice of 5 only. Current MoT's.

1990 (G) LEYLAND TIGER (CUMMINS L10). Plaxton 3200, ZF automatic, 53 reclining seats, double glazed, radio/pa/cassette. Choice of 2 only. Current MoT's.

1987 (D) LEYLAND TIGER (TL11-260). Jonckheere P50, 6 speed ZF (splitter), 50 reclining seats + courier, (re-trimmed Holdsworth moquette), curtains, rear continental door, N/S/R toilet. MoT June 1993.

1982 (X) LEYLAND LEOPARD (5 SPEED SEMI-AUTOMATIC) – Willowbrook 003, express doors, 44 seats + 8 standees. Current MoT.

MCW

1985 (B) MCW METROLINER. 72 seats, Voith automatic, Cummins 290 BHP, new MoT 11.11.93.

VOLVO

1990 (G) VOLVO B10M – Van Hool Alizee 'H', 6 speed ZF, Telma, 49 reclining seats + courier, footrests, centre toilet, double glazed, radio/pa/cassette. Choice of 2 only. current MoT's

1989 (F) VOLVO B10M – Van Hool Alizee 'H', 6 speed ZF, Telma, 49 reclining seats + courier, footrests, centre toilet, double glazed, radio/pa/cassette. Choice of 3 only. Current MoT's.

1986 **VOLVO B10M –** Jonckheere Jubilee, 49 reclining seats + courier, rear sunken toilet plus full specification. Current MoT.

SCANIA

1990 (G) SCANIA K92 DUPLE 320 (SLX). 51 seats, plus courier, rear toilet, dble glazed, radio/PA/cassette, current MoT.

TOYOTA

1987 (D) TOTOYA OPTIMO, 19 seats + courier, radio/pa/cassette, full drawn curtains. MoT April 1993.

MERCEDES

1985 (B) MERCEDES 307D – Reeve Burgess High Roof, 12 high-back seats, radio. MoT February 1993.

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WMT - 1,800 re-tests after 100 prohibitions

YOUR WEEKLY REPORT ON LAW AND THE COACH AND BUS OPERATOR BY MICHAEL JEWELL

OVER 100 prohibition notices led to West Midland Travel Ltd appearing at disciplinary proceedings before West Midland traffic commissioner John Mervyn Pugh in Birmingham.

The commissioner has directed that the company's licence, which authorises the operation of 1,270 double deckers and 530 single deckers from 14 depots, be terminated at the end of next July, instead of in December 1996. He also requires WMT to put its whole fleet through the MoT test over the next nine months. (*Coach and Bus Week*, November 7)

For WMT, Geoffrey Jones said that, from the end of January to the beginning of April, 381 vehicles were inspected by DoT vehicle examiners and 108 prohibitions issued, a prohibition rate of 28.34 per cent.

There had been 66 immediate prohibitions, some 17.34 per cent, and 42 delayed prohibitions, some 11 per cent. Those percentages were clearly too high. WMT accepted that individuals had been at fault and that defects had been carried forward without proper control.

Conceding that the majority of defects potentially affected public safety, Mr Jones said it was clear that the performance at some depots had been poor. However, WMT had an excellent on-road safety record.

Mr Jones said the most common complaint was about the form of the inspection record, the second was the complex audit trail

The company's predecessor had acquired part of Midland Red and, when bus companies merged, it took a long time for old differences to disappear. In theory all depots undertook the same system. However, when dealing with disparate organisations that grew over 20 years, separate customs and practices arose.

He said that in 1989 the PTE decided that it would only sell the company to its employees and it took two years for that buyout to be completed, the new company being formed in December 1991. There were two employee directors and, despite early difficulties, the company had remained united.

In February 1991 spot checks had shown five per cent of vehicles checked had defects, compared with the national average of 12.3 per cent. The annual test first-time pass rate was 88 per cent, compared with the national average of 65 per cent.

Mr Pugh said he would expect leaders of the industry to have a 100 per cent first-time pass rate.

Mr Jones said that an engineering director was appointed in 1991. A review of procedures led to the annual inspection first-time pass rate increasing to 91 per cent. A BS5750 project was also instituted. The importance of that was it brought in another monitoring body. BS5750 accreditation should be achieved by April of next year.

The new company was now in its eleventh month of trading. The fleet inspection took place within its first six weeks and the results came as a hugh shock.

Mr Pugh said WMT had been warned that the fleet check was coming.

Mr Jones said the most common complaint was about the form of the inspection record, the second was the complex audit trail and the third was that defects were not actioned immediately. Other criticism included failures to roller brake test vehicles after 5,000 kilometres, mileages not entered and no nil returns made by vehicle inspectors.

There was no criticism of staffing levels or of the premises. The inspection form in use was the one used by the old company for many years without criticism.

WMT's licence will now terminate at the end of July

However, a new form had now been devised and was in use in a pilot scheme. Mileage would be entered where possible, but a lot of the vehicles did not have odometers.

The policy was now to remedy all defects before a vehicle returned to service. A full rolling road brake test was now carried out every 5,000 kilometres. A headlamp problem had been mainly due to the quality of the bulbs purchased. WMT had written to all its 3,500 drivers, setting out their responsibilities.

The number of spot checks by WMT examiners would be increased, so 80 per cent of vehicles would be checked in 12 months

The drivers had been re-organised into teams of 20, with a service controller as team leader. One of the duties of the service controller was to monitor the defect reporting.

The driver who took a vehicle out had to inspect the immediate safety items. The driver on the road used his radio to report any defects and the engineer decided whether the vehicle stayed in service or not. The driver who ran into the depot had to make a report, including a nil report.

Mr Jones said that the quality of inspection had only been criticised at one depot. The six company vehicle examiners and the two engineering trainers were to complete DoT Vehicle Inspectorate courses.

That meant that the WMT and DoT vehicle examiners would be seeing things in the same way. The number of spot checks by WMT examiners would be increased, so that 80 per cent of the vehicles would be spot checked in 12 months. The standard of the vehicle inspectors would be assessed by random checks.

Because of the substantial variations in mileages, the WMT inspection system was on a mileage/time basis. If purely time based, the mileage of a particular vehicle between inspections could be excessive.

In most cases the inspections were triggered by the distance limit of 5,000 kilometres. The time trigger had been reduced from eight weeks to six weeks, but most vehicles were coming up for inspection on average every three weeks.

Mr Pugh expressed disquiet about the system but Mr Jones said

➔

WMT re-tests...

WMT was prepared to reduce the time base to four weeks, underpinned by a mileage trigger.

The vehicles operated on the "Wayfarer" system. Information was transferred into the main computer, which then produced a weekly analysis. The engineer controlled which vehicles were to be used. The system would be kept under review and discussed with the Vehicle Inspectorate over the next 12 months.

In reply to the commissioner, John Adamson, WMT's director of operations, said he thought the problem had been an over concentration on annual tests. It would have been better if they had concentrated on the condition of the fleet throughout the year.

He was fully confident the 14 garages could carry out the new

system. If WMT had to put its whole fleet through a further MoT test within six months it might deflect them from what they ought to be concentrating on.

Mr Pugh said it was essential to know that all the vehicles that were going to be on the new system were in A1 condition. Numbers must not defeat the object of having safe buses.

He was not going to be persuaded by numbers. If WMT had 1,800 buses that was their choice. They were not going to be treated any differently from the operator with a smaller number of buses. If WMT could not get 1,800 buses through the test in six months, he would have to consider whether it had too many. WMT seemed to be saying it could maintain 1,800 buses on the new system but it could not put them through the MoT test.

Denying that was so, Mr Jones said they were saying that a nine-month period would be logistically achievable. He said that the reduction of the inspection period to four weeks was possible within the available resources, assuming the normal rate of annual tests.

Mr Pugh said the standards required of WMT were the same as required of each and every operator, and they were the highest. There was no place in his book for percentage failure. It was admitted that a number of the prohibitions listed defects affecting public safety, and that no bus company should ever have allowed.

He had been persuaded for the moment WMT was capable of running 1,800 buses, but it was something he would look at carefully again in the future. He had also been persuaded, somewhat against his better judgement, that nine months was a better period than six months to get the fleet through the MoT test. He hoped efforts would be made at each depot to spot the 'rogue bus' and get it into A1 condition immediately.

Directing that the renewal of the licence be considered at a further public inquiry, Mr Pugh warned that, should WMT get even a single further prohibition indicating neglect he would have to consider very seriously whether it was a fit and proper company to run 1,800 buses.

Sacked driver wins £1,935 compensation

A J C Fallas (Leeds) Ltd has been ordered to pay £1,935 compensation for unfair dismissal to a driver it sacked after he stormed into the office and was abusive.

A Leeds Industrial Tribunal said Andrew Harrison had been dismissed with immediate effect. He had been wrong to behave in the way that he had.

However, there had been some provocation on the part of director Anthony Carrack. Mr Harrison had a problem with his coach being at Leeds Bus Station and no relief driver.

He was unable to carry on because of the risk of exceeding his permitted driving hours. Mr Carrack did not act reasonably in that, on the first two occasions Mr Harrison telephoned the office from the bus station, he indicated that the absence of a relief driver was Mr Harrison's problem. Everybody had a bad day that day and fuses were short.

The tribunal thought that should have been taken into account by management before any decision was made to terminate Mr Harrison's employment.

Mr Harrison attended an interview with Mr Carrack and Mr Beardsley.

The latter said Mr Harrison had started by saying "What's happening, am I sacked?"

It was in fact a disciplinary hearing held because the directors had already decided Mr Harrison was going to be dismissed unless he apologised for his outburst, said the tribunal.

They had concluded that Mr Carrack should not have reacted to Mr Harrison's question by simply answering in the affirmative. A reasonable employer would have asked Mr Harrison for an explanation and/or an apology.

Mr Carrack did not do so and Mr Harrison was thereby deprived of an opportunity of putting his side of the story before having his employment terminated. That was not a reasonable way to bring an employee's employment to an end.

However, the tribunal also thought Mr Harrison contributed to his own dismissal by his conduct. It was clear he had on occasions shown a tendency to become involved in altercations with managers and other employees.

There was evidence that he had used bad language in the presence of Mrs Beardsley. His timekeeping had left something to be desired and he was in the wrong in regard to the incident that precipitated his dismissal.

In calculating the amount of compensation, the tribunal assessed Mr Harrison's contributory fault at 50 per cent.

Ferris Coaches has duration shortened

MAINTENANCE problems have led to the duration of the licence held by Kathleen Ferris, trading as Ferris Coaches, of Senghenydd, being cut by south Wales traffic commissioner John Mervyn Pugh so that it now expires at the end of the year.

Mrs Ferris holds a licence for eight single deckers and five double deckers, which was due to expire at the end of 1995.

For Mrs Ferris, Christopher Childs told a Cardiff public inquiry that the prohibition notices issued, and two complaints from individuals, were not being challenged.

The majority of the prohibitions had occurred before November 1990 and had related to six vehicles. There had been an improvement since April, when a new senior fitter was appointed.

Most of the prohibitions related to vehicles on "the Spanish run", said Mr Childs. There had been difficulties facing the coaches operated outside the country.

Maintenance had fallen down because the inspection periods had not been strictly adhered to, and there had been problems over driver daily nil reporting.

Mrs Ferris was now aware of the necessity for records to be kept and that the inspection periods had to be rigidly complied with. Although the vehicle examiner's report in June of this year had expressed satisfaction, Mrs Ferris had taken the decision to employ an additional fitter. "Interviews had taken place, and confirmation was awaited of an appointment," said Mr Childs.

Agreeing that a lack of daily nil reports had contributed to the problems, Mr Childs said it was also accepted that letters had not been given to all the drivers and fitters, pointing out their responsibilities, and those who had letters had not signed a copy to say they had received, read and understood them.

When Mrs Ferris took on the licence in July 1990, she was entering unknown territory. It had been brought home to her that there had been more difficulties than she realised. She accepted that she must comply with the conditions of her licence and that the extra fitter must be employed immediately.

Mr Pugh said the system of maintenance recommended in the South Wales Area worked.

On journeys abroad there should be a journey record of the daily defect reports, with the firm's office being informed by Fax or telephone.

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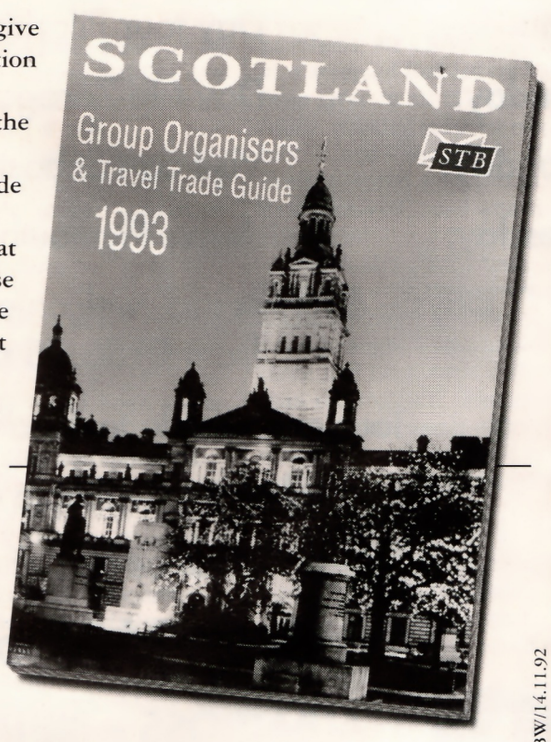

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New Spanish tours take Brittany Ferries route

INNOVATIVE packages into 'old Spain' are being sold by Albatross Tours using Brittany Ferries' Plymouth-Santander route.

Research this summer by Albatross directors Manfred and Sally Thelen spotted an opportunity to provide one of the most imaginative packages into the Rioja wine region of northern Spain - close to the 'bull running' town of Pamplona.

The mountainous Rioja region is a traditional sightseeing coach package, unlikely to be suitable for young families, warns Manfred Thelen: "It's a new area for us, very scenic, mountainous and backing on to the Basque region of northern Spain," he said.

"The area has the old Pilgrim's Way, Logrono, Estella and other old Spanish towns within it. It shouldn't be thought of as a sun package. This is a great deal more like Austria for holidaymakers."

Mr Thelen said flexible packages were based at the Hotels Balneario and Arnedillo, some 200 rooms. Both three-star hotels, on the outskirts of Arnedillo village, have pools, that at the Balneario filled with warm spa water. All rooms have en-suite bathroom and colour TV, and the Balneario a health treatment section including a Roman bath.

"We can offer an overland package using short sea crossings too," said Mr Thelen. "But that might devalue the purpose of the Brittany package. The main idea is to keep a high proportion of costs within Sterling currency, and keep the rest in a country which has also devalued. That the prices are very attractive is reinforced by the fact that I have already taken a number of bookings."

Mr Thelen said Brittany Ferries had offered some very competitive rates aboard their new superferry, going into service next year. Carrying 500 cars, the ship also has good cabin availability.

On a suggested itinerary of two nights aboard ship, without meals, and four half board at Arnedillo, prices range from £153.75 in April and October, to £185.75 in July and August, based on two sharing. Single supplements are around £30 for the package duration. A further three nights cost an additional £76.50 in a twin, £96.50 in a single.

Included in the package price is a wine tasting, flamenco dance evening or paella party and guiding service. Albatross estimates the itinerary would involve around 650 miles touring, plus the return trip to Plymouth.

Full details from Albatross Tours on 0622 690279/54725, Fax 0622 59454.

Wide range in latest UK brochure

GREATDAYS has announced a wide range of products in its 1993 UK destination brochure.

Among a large number of products are seven-night breaks in Pembrokeshire from £105 to £168, three-night Norfolk Broads breaks in May for £81, two nights at the ever-popular Blackpool Illuminations for £66, and Scottish five-night breaks at Blair Atholl from £122 to £152. All the above half-board.

Full details, brochures and reservations from Greatdays, on 061 928 9966, Fax 061 928 8226.

Derv price hit by rates change

THE exchange rates have affected fuel prices but Norway, Luxembourg and, to some extent, French and Finnish Derv is still not over expensive.

The following prices are at the pump, updated on November 6.

Austria	**£2.05**	**Italy**	**£2.27**
Belgium	**£2.27**	**Luxembourg**	**£1.64**
Denmark	**£2.32**	**Netherlands**	**£1.86**
Finland	**£1.82**	**Norway**	**£1.36**
France	**£1.82**	**Portugal**	**£2.05**
Germany	**£2.00**	**Spain**	**£2.05**
Greece	**£1.86**	**Sweden**	**£2.45**
Ireland	**£2.50**	**Switzerland**	**£2.09**

Cars speeded up

CARS are going through Dover in one third of the time they took in 1991, the average for 90 per cent of vehicles being just six minutes. Eighty per cent driver straight through without being stopped, thanks to separation of EC passport holders from the rest.

London bus in German promotion

A LONDON bus in Berlin, laden with colourful British characters, appealed to the German sense of humour and produced a warm response, said the British Tourist Authority after is marketing exercise. "Tourism is about having fun, having a good time, and people clearly appreciated our humorous approach. We are running a strong marketing campaign," said David Hamilton, manager of the BTA's German office. He said devaluation of the pound had brought with it a great marketing opportunity.

Cockney characters in Berlin

Oak drops winter rates

OAK Hotels has brought down prices at its luxurious Brighton Art Deco hotel to a lead-in of £13.75 bed and breakfast.

Themed breaks such as shopping weekends, visits to the Royal Pavilion and theatre trips are all available, while three-course dinners can be booked from £7 a head, and lunches from £5.25.

Oak is also selling its Wigan hotel hard this winter. Murder weekends from £75 a head and Granada Studios tours from £54 are on offer, based on half board in shared accommodation.

For full details of Oak Hotels' special winter and spring deals contact Lisa Sherwin on 0273 220033, Fax 0273 778000.

Euroshop fights '93 exchange rate crisis

Aachen - stone's throw from Maastricht (see story below)

Stuart Bowden reports from Euroshop - the second coach operators' workshop to be staged by Olau Line in conjunction with the Kent, Netherlands and Belgian tourist authorities and the Bus and Coach Council

RECENT drops in the value of the pound have meant more expensive trips to the continent for British tourists. At last week's 'Euroshop' event, Olau Line went some way towards alleviating the inflationary effects of devaluation upon continental coach travel by announcing that group travel fares aboard their ships would be pegged next year at 1992 levels.

"We are determined to do our bit to support the coaching trade in 1993, and by holding many fares at last year's levels we hope to give group travel fresh impetus," said Olau sales and marketing manager Patrick Williams.

Indeed, the company's general manager Case Rietkerk is suggesting there could well be growth in group travel next year, from Olau Line's point of view, at least.

"We have experienced a slight downturn this year," he said, "But we haven't entered a price war. I think next year will be a bit worse, because of the recession, plus the new package travel directives. Probably in 1993 the UK's share of trade will drop slightly, but for the past two years we've had record years from the UK market."

Pauline M Owen of the Belgian Tourist Office, speaking immediately after the Euroshop event, said that it is possible to still get good rates at weekends in Belgian hotels' - but that it is really too early to say exactly what effects the continued recession and the devaluation of sterling will have upon next year's short breaks trade.

The Netherlands Board of Tourism's Nim Singh said that her country had seen growth in the short break sector from UK visitors this year, but that 1993 was less certain.

Nim Singh described Euroshop, held aboard Olau's Hollandia, as a "very efficient way to talk to people,", while Pauline M Owen said that Belgian exhibitors had told her they had done 'excellent business'.

From the coach operator's point of view, Jim Fraser, from CBT Coachways in Colchester, said "It's definitely useful. I believe workshops of this type are valuable means of contact and communication - and a chance for coach operators to get together and swap ideas - in this business we don't always fully operate the free market economy priciple!"

Wartime memories in Holland

THE year after next, as has been widely publicised already, marks the 50th anniversary of D-Day. This centres mainly on the south coast of England and Normandy.

But already being prepared for in the Dutch province of Gelderland is the fact that mid-September of the same year will mark the passing of half a century since Operation Market Garden successfully led to the liberation of Holland.

The best known town in this respect is Arnhem, whose bridge has been the subject of so many stories. Events are scheduled to take place here, and at Nijmegen, to mark the anniversary.

There are a number of relevant museums in Gelderland which can be incorporated in tours relating to Operation Market Garden, including the Airborne Museum at Osterbeek, the Liberation Museum at Groesbeek, and the National War and Resistance Museum, Overloon.

Maastricht - trick or treaty?

MAASTRICHT, that pleasant town in the far south-east of the Netherlands, has never enjoyed such fame. There is scope here for inclusion on the tour itinerary - whether the infamous treaty is ever adopted or not.

Maastricht's geographical location and general attractiveness, surrounded as it is by one of the Netherlands' few hilly areas, and close to Valkenburg, Liege and Aachen, makes it, according to the Limburg province tourist office, an excellent overnight stopping off point and tour base.

The nearby town of Venlo, best known to British coach operators as a border crossing point into Germany, is for example offering group rates of between Dfl50 and 70 at its Novotel.

Heerlen, too, has embarked on a campaign to attract more group visitors.

Elsewhere in the Netherlands, the euphoria of this year's Floriade flower show, which attracted more than three million visitors, has now come to an end, and no events of such a grand scale are planned for 1993 (Floriade takes place only every ten years, and the venue for the 2002 show is yet to be decided).

However, arts and culture are to be celebrated in Amsterdam during the first half of the year with a series of special exhibitions relating to the 17th century 'Golden Age'.

And in 1994, an exhibition dedicated to the modern art of Mondriaan, who died in 1944, will be staged at The Hague between February and July.

Brits on the up in Belgium

THEMED attractions were well to the fore among the Belgian exhibitors at this year's Euroshop.

One, Bruparck at Brussels whose attractions include the popular 'Mini-Europe' and that familiar landmark for anyone using the main Belgian motorways, the Atomium, announced that it received its 50 millionth visitor the week before the show.

The Atomium has been recently completely renovated, and now houses new exhibitions relating to science and medicine.

Mini-Europe, the miniature recreation of famous buildings from all over the European Community, has announced its group rates for 1993.

They range, for parties of 20 or more, from BF320 for adults to between BF210 and BF270 for concessions, including a free guidebook for each person and one free place per coach.

Additionally, a variety of 'Combi-tickets' giving admission to some or all of the individual attractions at Bruparck, which also offers an 'IMAX' large screen cinema and a leisure pool, are available.

Bellewaerde Park, at Ypres, has also set its 1993 rates, and like Bruparck, reports an increase in the number of British visitors.

The theme park has been targeting British visitors, according to sales manager Ingrid de Cuyper, for five years now. Next year, it is 'probably' to open on weekends only during April, and then daily from May 1 to September 12.

Groups of 20 or more will be admitted in 1993 for BF440 per person, with the usual reductions for concessionary parties.

The town of Ypres itself has published a new sales guide giving details, plus prices, of other attractions and accommodation in the area.

Full details from the Belgium Tourist Office, on 081 861 3300, Fax 081 427 6760

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Sailing ahead

OLAU LINE offers two sailings each way daily between Sheerness and Vlissingen aboard its 'ferry liners', the 33,000-plus tonne Olau 'Hollandia' and 'Britannia', and has pegged its group fares at 1992 levels at least until the end of next year.

Full details are given in the new Group Travel Guide 1993/94, which covers sailings only, mini-cruises and short breaks packages. Fares are based on a minimum group of 15 adults, and can be as low as £7 for a single day journey in low season, to £20 for a night sailing in high season on a five-day excursion basis.

Information from Olau Group Reservations Department on 0795 666666.

Norwich hosts tourism trade event

EAST Anglian tourism is in the spotlight on February 17, when the tourist board runs its annual Day Out in East Anglia exhibition.

The event, staged at Norwich Sport Village, promises to be among the biggest collections of local tourism products under one roof. EATB expects 2,000 buyers, many of whom will be group organisers.

The show has possibilities not only for buyers, but for coach companies expanding into the area to sell to the GTOs visiting. Stand space is still available say the organisers.

Full details are available from Jackey Allen on 0473 822922, Fax 0473 823063.

TV boost for Tutankhamun

A NEW TV series due to start on BBC2 on November 20 will boost attendances to the Tutankhamun Exhibition in Dorset and may prove to be the platform for longer breaks.

Face to Face With Tutankhamun starts on BBC2 on Friday, November 20 at 9 pm, celebrating the 70th anniversary of the discovery of the famous tomb in November 1922, by Howard Carter.

New for the Tutankhamun exhibition - now in its fifth year - is a replica of Tut's mummy, constructed using the latest techniques.

Real human bones, animal skin and organic substitute flesh are used to reproduce the corpse in gruesome realism. Setting is the recreation of the tomb and ante chamber.

The exhibition's version of Face to Face With Tutankhamun opens on November 18, every day of the week.

Special education packs have been produced for school groups, but the exhibition will appeal to all age groups.

Details are available from the exhibition, on 0305 269741, Fax 0305 2688885.

Tut: real skin and bone in reconstruction

Beamish plans two big events

Beamish Museum has two of its biggest ever events planned for the 1993 calendar.

The widely acclaimed industrial museum in County Durham has set a date of June 26 and 27 for the opening of its new tramway circuit, now doubled in length with five fully restored trams in service. On July 31 and August 1, the mining industry in the north east is celebrated in Beamish' Colliery Village. Mine visits, choir singing, and other events are planned for the two days.

Beamish has arranged special rates with two nearby hotels, suggesting combined Beamish/Metro-Centre breaks. The Blackwell Grange Moat House Hotel (0325 380888) and Beamish Park and Gibside Arms Hotel (091 488 9292) are currently negotiating prices.

For details of the Beamish Museum, contact Trish Hall, on 0207 23811, Fax 0207 290933.

Carol wins at Sally

Sally Ferries' Expocoach competition was won by Carol Hand of Rover European Coaches, of Stroud, who gets a free return crossing for a coach and passengers between Ramsgate and Dunkirk.

Six runners-up, who each win a bottle of bubbly, are Stuart Broster of The King's Ferry; Daniel Bunce of Motts Travel; PW Goode of Goodes Coachways; Doug Oxspring of Ledger Travel; Carolyn Taylor of Huxleys Coaches; and J & R Tours, of Cambridge.

Spalding bulbs offer

SPRINGFIELDS Gardens in Spalding is offering to host groups during next year's Spalding Flower Festival, on May 1 to 3. The parade on May 1, celebrating its 35th year, is one of coaching's favourite days, but Springfields is anxious to spread the horticultural interest of the area throughout the summer by organising its own special events, many housed in the brand-new exhibition centre.

One of the biggest is Springfields Flower Show, on August 7 and 8. Charge for adults is £3.50, for OAPs £3, and children under 16 get in free. A 15 per cent discount applies, with an additional free ticket for every group, and free meal and admission for the coach driver. Similar charges apply during the tulip parade, which coincides with Springfields' country fair.

Other events include a motorcycle show, Easter craft fair, vintage car rally, horse show and model railway exhibition.

Normal admission to Springfields is £2.50 (£2.30 OAPs) with a 15 per cent group discount and free admission and meal for the driver.

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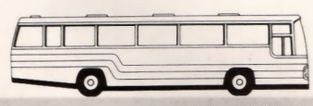

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CB14/11

Traditional attractions stay on top in 1991

HISTORIC properties and gardens remained at the top of the list of most popular attractions during 1991 despite the recession, says a new survey.

They attracted 91 million visitors, beating country parks with 49 million and leisure or theme parks with 34 million visits, says the British Tourist Authority's *Sightseeing in the UK 1991* survey.

All in the garden was rosy, with an extra four per cent more visits during the year, but historic attractions has a hard time, attendance dropping by the same percentage. Farm parks enjoyed a relative boom, bringing in five per cent more visitors, while wildlife attractions suffered a six per cent drop.

Historic properties blamed the fall on the Gulf War, which produced a 26 per cent reduction in the numbers of North American visitors. For instance, the Tower of London - a 'must' for Americans - lost 16 per cent of its visits, and the heart of Olde Englande, Stratford, saw 13 per cent fewer.

Tatton Park: Gardens got four per cent more visits

Major houses and gardens which opened in 1991 saw some spectacular visitor attendances. Easily the most popular new attraction this year was Tullie House in Carlisle, which took 310,000 visitors through its doors in 1991. The Sea Life Centre in Carlisle was second with 252,000 visits, and Look Out Country Park at Bracknell third with 223,000. Biddulph Grange Garden at Stoke-on-Trent attracted 109,000 people in its first year.

One major reason for growth listed by the top attractions was an increase in group and school visits. For instance, Biddenden Vineyards achieved improvements in attendance through promotion through coach operators, as did Dalgarven Mill. They were the exceptions. In the main, attractions which achieved improvements through groups did so directly with schools, cutting out the coach operator altogether.

The most effective way to improve attendance was to improve marketing, attractions improvements following second. Good weather was only a minor reason for improved figures (6 per cent) but a popular reason for poor figures (15 per cent).

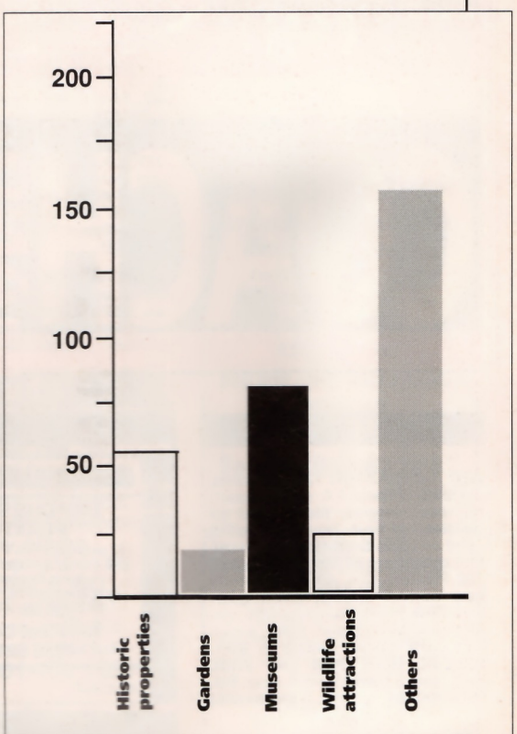
Most popular reason for a drop in attendance was the recession, which 42 per cent of the attractions said had contributed. Only five per cent mentioned increased charges, fewer special events, shorter opening hours or poor publicity.

The importance of children to attractions was underlined by 1991's attendances. Thirty per cent of all visitors were under 16, though they accounted for only 17 per cent of visitors to gardens.

Average admission charges at Historic houses was £1.81, at gardens £1.70, at museums £1.32, at wildlife parks £2.85, and £2.22 average for the rest, underlining that castles, houses and gardens offer some of the best value excursions in the UK.

● **Sightseeing in the UK 1991 is available for £19 from the British Tourist Authority Research Services, Thames Tower, Black's Road, London W6 9EL.**

Many historic properties hit by falling US visitor numbers in '91



Number of visits to attractions, by type, in millions

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1978 AEC RELIANCE, Plaxton Supreme IV, first class condition, recent MoT, new seats. **£6,000 ono. Telephone 0259 212802.** (33484/AEC)

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DAF DHS SB2300 PLAXTON
53 reclining seats + courier, radio PA cassette, under floor lockers, autumn moquette seats, specimen vehicle, 1984 model.
£29,000 + VAT
Tel. Fleet Coaches 0252 624404
(33370/BAR)

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1976 LEYLAND LEOPARD
Dominant I, semi auto, 53 seats, MoT April '93, power door, mechanically excellent, good all rounder.
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1980 BEDFORD YMT PLAXTON SUPREME, 53 seats, express doors, very reliable. **£5,950 ovno + VAT. Tel. 081-888 6062.** (33583/BE)

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BEDFORD

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1982 BEDFORD YNT Plaxton Supreme VI Express, 49 recliners, recently retrimmed in brown, white/blue paint, all good order, MoT March 1993. **£6,750 + VAT.**

GO WHITTLE
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0746 861208 evenings
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1976 Bedford YRT Plaxton Supreme, 53 seater, MoT March '93.....**£2,250 + VAT**

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1977 Bedford YMT Dominant II, 49 seater, MoT Aug '93 .....**£3,000 + VAT**

All in use daily
0728 830414 (Suffolk)
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1980 YMT DUPLE, 53 retrimmed seats, good condition. We have owned this vehicle since 1981. FSH, Telma. **New MoT** expires September 1993. **£4,950 + VAT. Tel. 071-739 5454.** (33577/BE)

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1989 BOVA FUTURA FHD 12.290 INTEGRAL 12M

CHOICE OF FOUR with reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed side windows, etc.

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53 recliners + courier, curtains, carpets, radio cassette PA, wheel trims, Telma, MoT.

£16,950

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DAF

1986 DAF SB 2300 DHS PLAXTON 3500 EXECUTIVE

49/53 reclining seats, TV/video, radio/PA system, drinks machine, demountable toilet, full crew curtains, aircraft type lockers, new MoT, owned by us from new.

£45,000 + VAT ono

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Private plate, 51 reclining seats, rear mounted toilet, continental door, Telma, Blaupunkt radio p/a, power door, side curtains, MoT until January 1993. First class condition throughout, owned from new – low mileage.

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1978 LEYLAND LEOPARD, semi-auto Plaxton, 53 seater, MoT Jan '93, white/red with Autumn tint interior. Clean throughout, **£6,500 + VAT. Tel. 0785 284667.** (33597/LE)

1978 LEYLAND LEOPARD Dominant II, 49 seater, full test, **£6,500. Leopard 680** engine, **£850. Tel. 0506 634685.** (33596/LE)

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48 seats, rear toilet, wired for video, recon engine.

£21,000 + VAT

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CHOICE of six Leyland Nationals, all long tests, 41/50 seat, 'L' to 'S' reg from **£3,000 each + VAT. Tel. Beestons (Ipswich) 0473 823243.** (33622/LEY)

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1984 MCW METROLINER

67 seats, TV, video, toilet, coffee machine, pay-phone, MoT September '93.

£18,000 + VAT (Work available)

Finance available subject to status

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1987 MCW METRORIDER, 25 seater coach, Cummins 6B manual, one owner, very clean condition, **£16,250 + VAT. Tel. 0480 860581.** (33592/MCW)

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NEW MERCEDES 711D turbo luxury coach built, 28 seats, large boot, boot racks, power swivel door, stock, **£39,000.** NEW MERCEDES 709D, 29 service seats, 7 standees, coachbuilt, wide entrance door and passage, Eberspacher heating, Dip Tac, stock, **£34,500.** Also 609 24 and 26 with or without power door. MERCEDES 410, 16 seats, immediate delivery. **Tel. Blythswood Motors, on 041-221 3165 or 041-639 6107 evenings.** (33627/ME)

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£79,995 + VAT

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First class order

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VOLVO

1988 VOLVO B10M
GL, Telma, ZF, Webasto, Plaxton 3500 4 star low driver, 49/53 reclining seats with tables and glove nets. Demountable toilet, continental door, aircraft lockers, Klix drinks machine/fridge, TV/video/radio, double glazed, sun blinds, full curtains, all rubber floor carpeted gangway, 3 large air extractors, bunk and through pannier lockers, airport lights, full 12 months MoT, superb condition, owned from new.
£62,500 + VAT
Flights Coach Travel Ltd
Birmingham 021 554 5232
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(33645/VO/PIC/CH)

1987 (Feb) P/P
VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE
ZF manual gearbox, 55 reclining seats, courier seat, centre offside toilet, continental door, wired for video and TV, Blaupunkt radio cassette/pa, all white, one owner from new, excellent condition, MoT March 1993.
No time wasters please.
£62,000 + VAT
Tel: 0264 790382/790606 (33565/VO)

2 x 1987 BEDFORD YNT Plaxton Paramount, MK III, 53 seater, p/p, radio p/a, power door, long range tank, extra side locker, curtains, new test. Both these have been operated since new on our own tours and have only covered 150,000 miles approximately. White/red/blue.
£35,000 + VAT each
1 x 1985 VOLVO B10M Mk II, Plaxton Paramount Mk II, low drive, 53 reclining seats, curtains, pannier locker, radio, P/A, Webasto/Telma/tinted windows/Tempo 100, testing. White/red/blue.
£45,000 + VAT
1 x 1982 VOLVO B10M GT, Plaxton Supreme VI, 57 seater, p/p, side locker, radio P/A, power door, double glazing, curtains, testing. White/Red/Blue.
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1988 'E' Reg
VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL
52 reclining seats, rear toilet, video, monitor, Webastos, rear demountable servery, new Volvo engine fitted August, new MoT, grey/red moquette, blue/white exterior.
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VOLVO B10M LAG GALAXY COACH
1983 (PP), 49 reclining seats + courier seat, rear toilet, public address system, coffee machine, good condition.
£28,000 + VAT
Will consider part exchange
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1980 V REG 53 seat, DOM II express, MoT to July '93, **£13,250 + VAT. Tel. 0259 216180.** (33636/VO)

1990 VOLVO B10M
Van Hool, 52 seater, rear toilet
Tel. 050585 456
(33495/VO)

1981 (May) VOLVO DOMINANT III
Air/leaf, 57 seats, tested September 1993, very reliable coach, radio PA, unwritten white.
£13,000 + VAT
Tel. 081-804 7678
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1987 LEYLAND TIGER DUPLE Exec 320, 50 reclining seats, TV, coffee machine, servery, toilet, **£38,000 + VAT. Tel. (0371) 872644 (Essex).** (33600/VO)

VOLVO B58, 1976, 12 mtr Supreme, 53 seater, tested. **£4,950. Tel. 0203 637171.** (33585/VO)

1982 VOLVO B58 Auto, Jonckheere body, air over leaf suspension, 49 recliners, toilet, coffee machine, TV, continental door, driver's bunk, Telma, cruise control, COF November, 1993, **£28,000 + VAT. Tel. (0371) 872644 (Essex).** (33599/VO)

VOLVO B10M. THO 100 ED engine, average mileage, good running order with new water pump, turbo and fuel pump. **£2,250 ono exchange. Tel. 0430 827121.** (33650/VO)

VOLVO

1983 B10M Jonckheere, double glazing, Telma, MoT Feb '93, 53 seats, **£29,500. 1986 B10M Plaxton 3500,** Telma, d/glazing, new MoT, 51/53 seats, **£42,500. 1988 B10M Van Hool,** new MoT, usual Alizee spec, 49/53 seats, **£65,000.** All above have r/seats, toilet, coffee machine, video, exceptionally good condition. **Tel. 0453 832121.** (33619/VO)

B58 VOLVO AIR/LEAF 1980 Duple Dominant, new MoT expires Oct '93, 57 retrimmed seats, private plate, cream, one colour, many extras, very good condition. **£12,750. Tel. 071-739 5454.** (33481/VO)

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1988 FREIGHT ROVER, 20 seats, full soft trim, PA/RC Carlyle body, electric door, silver, new engine, 12 mths MoT available, **£6,500 ono. BEDFORD YRT Plaxton,** N reg, 500 engine, 53 seater, **offers, seen Inverness. Tel. 08093 428.** (33638/MB)

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FREIGHT ROVER SHERPA, 1987, Dormobile body, 16 seats + 5 standees, power door, fitted for one man operation, MoT June 1993, blue and cream livery, 2 owners from new, had FTA inspection this week. **£3,350 + VAT** for quick sale. **Tel. 061-832 9445.** (33602/MB)

C REG BEDFORD CF, diesel minibus, 13 seater, PSV until Sept '93, **£3,000 ono + VAT. Tel. 0473 250349.** (33631/MB)

1987 VW OPTARE 25 service seats, MoT to Sept '93, **£6,500 + VAT. Tel. Beestons (Ipswich) 0473 823243.** (33624/MB)

1988 F MAZDA E2200, Diesel, 14 seat minibus, full PSV test, blue with grey moquette interior, ready to work. **£4,500 + VAT. Tel: 0282 865157.** (33609/MB)

IVECO 49/10 21 seater with destination equipment, power door, 1986 (D), long MoT, excellent condition, **£6,950 ono + VAT, choice. Tel. 0249 782401.** (33637/MB)

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52 seater, MoT Dec '93, radio, pa, choice of two
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53 seats & courier, radio, pa, SB2300, MoT March '93.
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12 seater including driver, certificate of conformity, MoT June '93, side sliding door, choice of two
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LEYLAND TIGER 245 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500. High spec executive coach, 49 reclining seats, rear toilet, drinks machine, continental door, TV, video, Telma, telephone, double glazing, 6-speed ZF gearbox, colour all white, PP..... **£24,500 + VAT**

1989 DAF SB2300 DHTD DUPLE 320, 51/53 recliners, demountable servery, rear toilet, gangway carpet, one owner, good condition, MoT March '93 **£55,000 + VAT**

1988 TOYOTA OPTIMO, 19 seater, coffee machine, driver's suspension seat, 6 months old, cost approx £550, Blaupunkt radio/cassette/PA, replacement parts ..... **£22,750 + VAT**

1987 DAF BOVA FUTURA, high floor, 49 recliners + courier, double glazing, curtains, centre toilet, continental door, driver's bunk, 2 TVs & video fitted, all white, excellent condition ..... **£55,500 + VAT**

1984 DAF DKFL MB200 DUPLE CARIBBEAN, full exec, 49-seater + courier, MoT January '93, wired TV and video, first class condition, in every day use ..... **£32,000 + VAT**

1984 VOLVO VAN HOOL, low driver, 49 seats, toilet, TV/video, coffee machine, private plate..... **£40,000**

1983 DUPLE CARIBBEAN 1 TIGER, long MoT, 50 recliners, bunk & courier, double glazed, radio, PA, wired for TV and coffee machine, good clean motor, all white, ready for work, blue interior..... **£24,000 + VAT**

1983 NEOPLAN SKYLINER MERCEDES V10, manual ZF, 6 speed, multi screen video, toilet, fridge, boiler, 77 reclining seats, fully refurbished, reconditioned engine, 2 owners from new, MoT Jan '93 ..... **£38,000 + VAT**

1980 BEDFORD YMT, 12 metre, Duple, 53 seats, new test ..... **£7,500 + VAT**

1979 BEDFORD YMT DUPLE DOMINANT 11, 53 re-moquetted seats, MoT 16/3/93..... **£5,000 + VAT**

1977 LEYLAND LEOPARD PLAXTON SUPREME, semi auto, express doors, MoT June '93, taxed March '93, remoquette three years ago, reduced to ..... **£3,750 + VAT**

1972 L Reg VOLVO B58 PLAXTON, bodywork, express doors, excellent interior, no MoT, hence ..... **£2,750 + VAT**

WILLOWBROOK WARRIOR, built 1989 on Bedford 500 with automatic gearbox, MoT September '93, 61 moquette seats, service bus ..... **£12,000 + VAT**

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D Reg FREIGHT ROVER CARLYLE II, 20 high back seat minibus, POD, destination equipment, MoT October '93. Ideal dual purpose vehicle ..... **£5,750 or hire for £225 + VAT per week**

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1987 D IVECO 49/10, 19/21 seats, power door, destination gear, choice of 2, MoT June 93.

1986 D MERCEDES 608D, 21 seats, 7 standees, power door, MoT July 93.

1986 D IVECO 79/14 Caetano, 24 moquette bus seats, power door, white exterior, MoT Sept 93.

1986 D FORD TRANSIT, 14 seats, petrol, s/door, white exterior, MoT Sept 93.

1985 B LEYLAND CUB. Duple Dominant bus body, Allison automatic gearbox, 27 coach seats, 8 standees, MoT June 93.

1983 (Y) LEYLAND TIGER CUB, Reeves Burgess body, 25 seats, power door, MoT September 1992.

1988 (E) VOLVO B10M Plaxton Paramount 3500, 49 seat coach, toilet, continental door, TV, video, radio PA, MoT April 93.

1987 D BEDFORD Plaxton Paramount 3200, 53 seats, power door, tinted windows, MoT May 93.

1986 C VOLVO B10M Plaxton Paramount 3500, 53 seat coach, power door, tinted windows, double glazed, MoT April 93.

1985 B VOLVO B10M, Plaxton Paramount 3500, 50 seats, rear toilet, HP ZF auto gearbox, white exterior, MoT Sept 93.

1984 A VOLVO B10M Plaxton Paramount 3500, 53 seat coach, power door, tinted windows, double glazed, MoT April 93.

1979 PP VOLVO B58 Plaxton Supreme IV, 57 seats, power door, radio PA, MoT April 93.

1978 T BEDFORD YMT Plaxton Supreme III, 53 seats, power door, MoT Sept 93.

1978 T BEDFORD YMT Duple Dominant, bus body, 59 seats, luggage pen, MoT April 93.

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D REG DAF MB2300 Duple 340 Executive, 53 str, toilet, drinks machine, drivers bunk, wired video, **£38,750; B REG BEDFORD** YNV Duple, 53 E type seats, Blaupunkt radio cassette, **£19,750.** Both vehicles in good condition, part exchange welcome. **Daisy Bus Service, Brigg (0652) 652481.** (33361/VS)

1984 DAF MB2000 DKFL Van Hool, 51-55 seats, centre sunken toilet, Webasto, wired TV/video, MoT 11/93, 2 off. **£40,000 each.**

1984 DAF MB200 DKFL Van Hool, 48 seats, rear floor toilet, fridge, wired TV/video, MoT 3/93. **£40,000.**

1985 DAF MB200 DKVL Van Hool, 49 seats, rear sunken toilet, wired TV/video, MoT 4/93. **£48,000.**

1986 DAF MB200 DKVL Plaxton 3500, 51-53 seats, rear sunken toilet, wired TV/video, MoT 11/93. **£50,000.**

1987 (E) DAF SB2300 Jonckheere P50, 51 seats, centre sunken toilet, fridge, water boiler, wired TV/video, MoT 8/93. **£55,000.**

1984 VOLVO B10M Jonckheere P90, 59 seats, fridge/hot drinks, toilet, video, TV monitors, MoT 3/93. **£35,000.**

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£24,500 ono

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35 seats, p/steering, curtains, MoT March '93.
£4,950 ono

1972 LEYLAND LEOPARD PLAXTON
S/A, 45 seats, MoT Sept '93.
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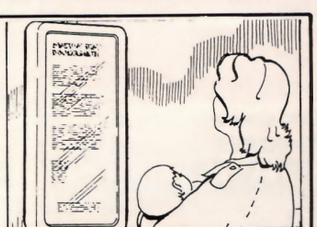

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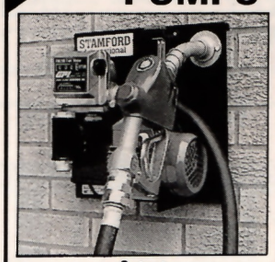

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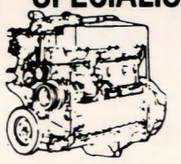

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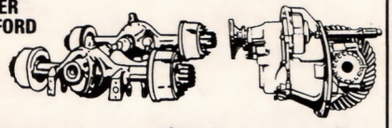

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APPOINTMENTS AND TENDERS

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR LOCAL BUS SERVICES

The County Council is seeking tenders from bus and coach operators to enter into service subsidy agreements to provide bus services in all area(s). Operators wishing to receive further information and tender documents should contact immediately: County Planner, Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1LF or telephone Chelmsford (0245) 492211 extension 51591. Operators on the tender list should have received documents by 13 November 1992. Please telephone the above number if they have not been received by that date.

Completed tender documents must be received by 1200 hours (noon) on 8 December 1992. Tenders received after this date will not be considered.

R W Adcock
Chief Executive and Clerk

4 November 1992
(33562/TEN)

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Contact Box No 33508, Coach & Bus Week, Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough PE1 1DS

(33529/BOP)

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London Transport bus services

Invitation to tender

London Transport invites tenders for the operation of the following bus routes.

They will continue to be marketed as an integral part of the London Transport network.

208 ORPINGTON – LEWISHAM

399 HADLEY WOOD – BARNET GENERAL HOSPITAL

The closing date for tenders is Monday 11th January 1993, and the services will commence in April 1993 (Route 399) and August 1993 (Route 208).

If you are interested please talk to Nick Newton on 071-918 3468 for details and application forms. Or write to him at: Tendered Bus Division, London Transport, Broadway Buildings, 55 Broadway, London SW1H 0BD

London Transport

BOROUGH ENGINEER AND SURVEYOR'S DEPARTMENT

SELECT TENDER LIST FOR HERITAGE TROLLEY BUS ROUTE

The Council propose to invite tenders from selected Companies for the provision and operation of a Heritage Trolley Bus route in Bournemouth Town Centre.

The route will operate over a 1.5km long circuit on public highway around the Lower Pleasure Gardens, linking The Square with Bournemouth Pier Approach. The contract will include the provision, installation and maintenance of all plant and equipment necessary to operate a trolley bus service over this route, together with the provision, operation and maintenance of an approved trolley bus on a continuous circuit daily.

The successful tenderer will be required to obtain all necessary approvals and sanctions to install and operate the service.

Applications must be in writing, accompanied by details of similar works (if any) and the name and address of the supervising officer to whom reference can be made, together with the name and address of the Company's banker.

Applications are to be submitted to:

R E L Lelliott, Borough Engineer and Surveyor, Town Hall Annexe, St Stephens Road, Bournemouth, BH2 6EA.

By 1600 hours on **Friday 20 November 1992** at the latest.

(33521/TEN)

D NEWELL
Chief Executive

BOURNEMOUTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

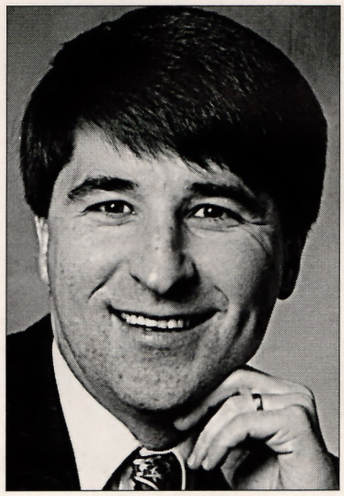
Ulsterbus coach chief aims high

GARETH Kirk, the new commercial manager for Ulsterbus, is responsible for the coach holidays, private hire, cross Channel express services, together with the Ulsterbus travel centre.

For the past four years, he has been company accountant for Ulsterbus and Citybus and he is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland.

Mr Kirk said: "I look forward to building upon the foundations of quality and reliability for which Ulsterbus is well renowned and we will continue to be innovative, competitive and responsive to the needs of our customers.

"Having just been awarded the Northern Ireland Travel and Tourism Award for best surface transport carrier, it is our aim not only to maintain the standard which has been set but to improve it continuously."



Gareth Kirk

Sales manager posts

AE AUTO Parts has appointed two new sales managers, dealing with its range of diesel engine parts.

Peter Redgate (below left) is UK northern regional sales manager, covering Yorkshire, the north west and east, Scotland and Northern Ireland. He joined Payen Gaskets in 1985 and, after the merger with AE, became area sales manager for north west England and north Wales.

Phil Johnson (below right) has been appointed area sales manager for London and the south east. He joined the AE Group at Wellworthy in 1972 and transferred to AE Auto parts in 1987. He was most recently products support manager, but was previously area sales manager for the south east.

Coachlines appoints former council man

COACHLINES, which is part of the Warrington Borough Transport group of companies, has appointed Bill Snow **to the newly-created post of coaching manager.**

Mr Snow, 52, was formerly chief officer of the Warrington Borough Council Environmental Health department and took early retirement at the end of March 1992.

He has since obtained a full PCV licence and furthered his interest in travel and driving by taking up UK and Continental tours. He is also a holder of advanced driving certificates from RoSPA and the Institute of Advanced Motorists.

Fellowship

DAVID Ames, finance and administrative manager of GM Buses' coaching arm, Charterplan, has been awarded a Fellowship of the Institute of Travel and Tourism, after gaining top prize in the institute's national examinations. These usually lead to membership of the institute but Mr Ames' high standard of work not only gained him the fellowship but also a cheque for £50 donated by Thomson Holidays.

Scots get NVQs

THREE Grampian Transport bus drivers are the first in Scotland to be awarded Scottish Vocational Qualifications in bus-driving. **Graham Scott**, 29, **James Taylor**, 46, and **Charlie Phillips**, 49, received their certificates at the company's safe driving awards in Aberdeen last week. Grampian Transport recently signed up to achieve Investors in People Status, the first transport company in the country to do so.

Parent acts

COMPONENT manufacturer Garphyttan has appointed **Geoff Balfour** acting general manager. His appointment by the Swedish parent company follows the death of **Derek Hall** who was managing director of the UK operation (*Coach and Bus Week*, October 24). Mr Balfour, who joined Garphyttan 10 years ago, is also currently company secretary and chief accountant. He heads an unchanged team of managers and will direct the overall management of Haldex, Power Systems and Wire Divisions.

COACH AND BUS WEEK
The PSV Industry's News Weekly ISSUE 39 NOVEMBER 14 1992

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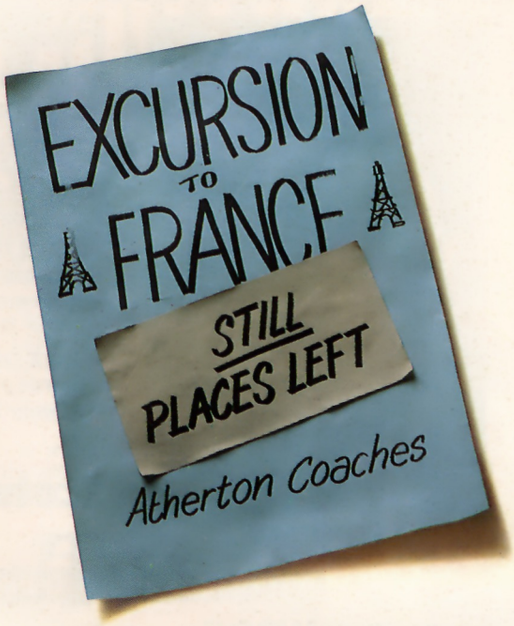

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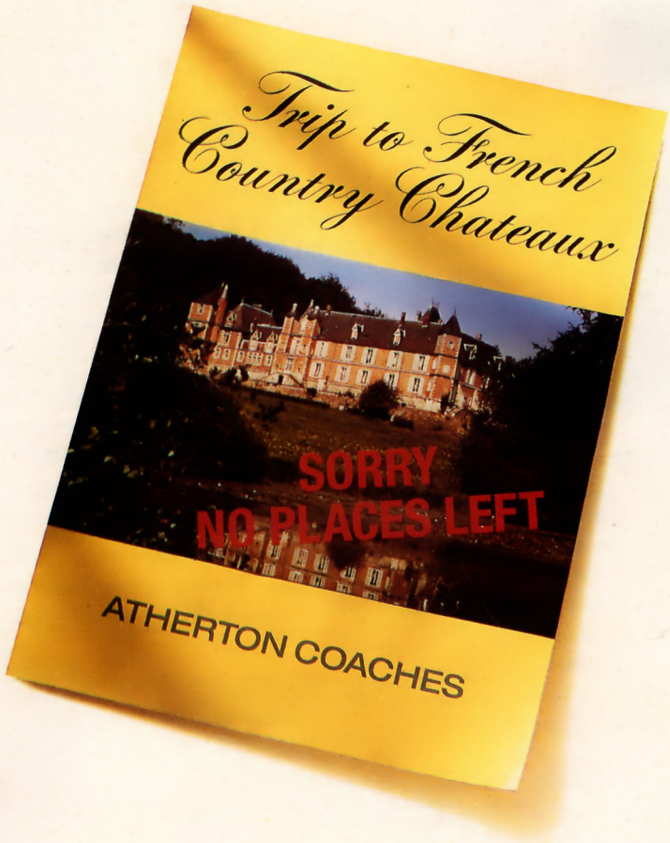

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